This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

3 3433 08159720 9

BWI
Gibbon

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

DECLINE AND FALL

OF THE

ROMAN EMPIRE.

By EDWARD GIBBON, Esq;

VOLUME THE SECOND.

A NEW EDITION.

BASIL:

PRINTED FOR J. J. TOURNEISEN.

M D CC LXXXVII.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
159022B
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
B 1940 L.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OF THE

SECOND VOLUME.

CHAP. XI.

Reign of Claudius. — Defeat of the Goths. — Victories, Triumph, and Death of Aurelian.

A. D.		Page
268	AUREOLUS invades Italy, is defeated and beſieged at Milan	2
	Death of Gallienus	4
	Character and Elevation of the Emperor Claudius	ib.
268	Death of Aureolus	6
	Clemency and Juſtice of Claudius	7
	He undertakes the Reformation of the Army	ib.
269	The Goths invade the Empire	8
	Diſtreſs and Firmneſs of Claudius	10
	His Victory over the Goths	ib.
270	Death of the Emperor, who recommends Aurelian for his Succeſſor	12
	The Attempt and Fall of Quintilius	13
	Origin and Services of Aurelian	14
	Aurelian's ſucceſsful Reign	15
	His ſevere Diſcipline	ib.
	He concludes a Treaty with the Goths	16
	He reſigns to them the Province of Dacia	17
270	The Alemannic War	19
	The Alemanni invade Italy	21
	They are at laſt vanquished by Aurelian	23

Cornwall 3 Dec 49

A. D.		Page
271	Superſtitious Ceremonies	23
	Fortifications of Rome	24
	Aurelian ſuppreſſes the two Uſurpers	25
	Succeſſion of Uſurpers in Gaul	ib.
271	The Reign and Defeat of Tetricus	26
272	Character of Zenobia	27
	Her Beauty and Learning	28
	Her Valour	ib.
	She revenges her Husband's Death	29
	She reigns over the Eaſt and Egypt	30
272	The Expedition of Aurelian	31
	The Emperor defeats the Palmyrenians in the Battles of Antioch and Emeſa	32
	The State of Palmyra	33
	It is beſieged by Aurelian	34
273	Aurelian becomes Maſter of Zenobia, and of the City	35
	Behaviour of Zenobia	36
	Rebellion and Ruin of Palmyra	37
	Aurelian ſuppreſſes the Rebellion of Firmus in Egypt,	38
274	Triumph of Aurelian	39
	His Treatment of Tetricus and Zenobia	40
	His Magnificence and Devotion	41
	He ſuppreſſes a Sedition at Rome	42
	Obſervations upon it	43
	Cruelty of Aurelian	45
275	He marches into the Eaſt, and is aſſaſſinated	46

CHAP. XII.

Conduct of the Army and Senate after the Death of Aurelian.—Reigns of Tacitus, Probus, Carus, and his Sons.

A. D.		Page
	Extraordinary Conteſt between the Army and the Senate for the Choice of an Emperor	48
275	A peaceful Interregnum of eight Months	49
	The Conſul aſſembles the Senate	51
	Character of Tacitus	52
	He is elected Emperor	53
	He accepts the Purple	ib.
	Authority of the Senate	54
	Their Joy and Confidence	55
276	Tacitus is acknowledged by the Army	56
	The Alani invade Aſia, and are repulſed by Tacitus	57
276	Death of the Emperor Tacitus	58
	Uſurpation and Death of his Brother Florianus	59
	Their family ſubſiſts in Obſcurity	60
	Character and Elevation of the Emperor Probus	ib.
	His reſpectful Conduct towards the Senate	62
	Victories of Probus over the Barbarians	63
277	He delivers Gaul from the Invaſion of the Germans	65
	He builds a Wall from the Rhine to the Danube	66
	He carries his Arms into Germany	67
	Introduction and Settlement of the Barbarians	69
	Daring Enterpriſe of the Franks	71
279	Revolt of Saturninus in the Eaſt	72
280	—— of Bonoſus and Proculus in Gaul	73
281	Triumph of the Emperor Probus	74
	His Diſcipline	ib.
282	His Death	75
	Election and Character of Carus	76
	The Sentiments of the Senate and People	78

A. D.		Page
	Carus defeats the Sarmatians, and marches into the East	78
283	He gives Audience to the Perſian Ambaſſadors	79
283	His Victories and extraordinary Death	80
	He is ſucceeded by his two Sons, Carinus and Numerian	81
284	Vices of Carinus	82
	He celebrates the Roman Games	84
	Spectacles of Rome	85
	The Amphitheatre	87
	Return of Numerian with the Army from Perſia	89
	Death of Numerian	90
284	Election of the Emperor Diocletian	91
285	Defeat and Death of Carinus	92

CHAP. XIII.

The Reign of Diocletian and his three Aſſociates, Maximian, Galerius, and Conſtantius.—General Reeſtabliſhment of Order and Tranquillity.—The Perſian War, Victory and Triumph.—The new Form of Adminiſtration.—Abdication and Retirement of Diocletian and Maximian.

A. D.		Page
285	Elevation and Character of Diocletian	93
	His Clemency and Victory	95
286	Aſſociation and Character of Maximian	96
292	Aſſociation of two Cæſars Galerius and Conſtantius	97
	Departments and Harmony of the four Princes	99
	Series of Events	ib.
287	State of the Peaſants of Gaul	100
	Their Rebellion and Chaſtiſement	101

A. D.		Page
287	Revolt of Carauſius in Britain	102
	Importance of Britain	103
	Power of Carauſius	ib.
289	Acknowledged by the other Emperors	104
294	His Death	105
296	Recovery of Britain by Conſtantius	ib.
	Defence of the Frontiers	106
	Fortifications	107
	Diſſentions of the Barbarians	ib.
	Conduct of the Emperors	108
	Valour of the Cæſars	ib.
	Treatment of the Barbarians	109
	Wars of Africa and Egypt	110
296	Conduct of Diocletian in Egypt	111
	He ſuppreſſes Books of Alchymy	113
	Novelty and Progreſs of that Art	ib.
	The Perſian War	114
282	Tiridates the Armenian	ib.
286	His Reſtoration to the Throne of Armenia	115
	State of the Country	ib.
	Revolt of the People and Nobles	116
	Story of Mamgo	ib.
	The Perſians recover Armenia	117
296	War between the Perſians and the Romans	118
	Defeat of Galerius	119
	His Reception by Diocletian	120
297	Second Campaign of Galerius	ib.
	His Victory	121
	His Behaviour to his royal Captives	122
	Negociation for Peace	ib.
	Speech of the Perſian Ambaſſador	123
	Anſwer of Galerius	ib.
	Moderation of Diocletian	124
	Concluſion of a Treaty of Peace	ib.
	Articles of the Treaty	126
	The Aboras fixed as the Limits between the Empires	ib.
	Ceſſion of five Provinces beyond the Tigris	ib.

A. D.		Page
	Armenia	127
	Iberia	128
303	Triumph of Diocletian and Maximian	ib.
	Long Abſence of the Emperors from Rome	129
	Their Reſidence at Milan	130
	——— ——— at Nicomedia	131
	Debaſement of Rome and of the Senate	132
	New Bodies of Guards, Jovians and Herculians	133
	Civil Magiſtracies laid aſide	134
	Imperial Dignity and Titles	ib.
	Diocletian aſſumes the Diadem, and introduces the Perſian Ceremonial	136
	New Form of Adminiſtration, two Auguſti, and two Cæſars	138
	Increaſe of Taxes	139
	Abdication of Diocletian and Maximian	141
	Reſemblance to Charles the Fifth	ib.
304	Long Illneſs of Diocletian	142
	His Prudence	143
	Compliance of Maximian	ib.
	Retirement of Diocletian at Salona	144
	His Philoſophy	145
313	His Death	146
	Deſcription of Salona and the adjacent Country	ib.
	Of Diocletian's Palace	147
	Decline of the Arts	149
	——— of Letters	150
	The new Platoniſts	151

CHAP. XIV.

Troubles after the Abdication of Diocletian.—Death of Conſtantius.—Elevation of Conſtantine and Maxentius.—Six Emperors at the ſame Time.—Death of Maximian and Galerius.—Victories of Conſtantine over Maxentius and Licinius.—Re-union of the Empire under the Authority of Conſtantine.

A. D.		Page
305—323.	Period of civil Wars and Confuſion	153
	Character and Situation of Conſtantius	ib.
	Of Galerius	154
	The Two Cæſars, Severus and Maximin	155
	Ambition of Galerius diſappointed by two Revolutions	157
274	Birth, Education, and Eſcape of Conſtantine	ib.
306	Death of Conſtantius, and Elevation of Conſtantine	159
	He is acknowledged by Galerius, who gives him only the Title of Cæſar, and that of Auguſtus to Severus	161
	The Brothers and Siſters of Conſtantine	ib.
	Diſcontent of the Romans at the Apprehenſion of Taxes	162
306	Maxentius declared Emperor at Rome	164
	Maximian re-aſſumes the Purple	165
307	Defeat and Death of Severus	ib.
	Maximian gives his Daughter Fauſta, and the Title of Auguſtus, to Conſtantine	167
	Galerius invades Italy	168
	His Retreat	170
307	Elevation of Licinius to the Rank of Auguſtus	171
	Elevation of Maximian	ib.
308	Six Emperors	172
	Misfortunes of Maximin	ib.
310	His Death	175

A. D.		Page
311	Death of Galerius	175
	His Dominion shared between Maximin and Licinius	176
306—312.	Adminiſtration of Conſtantine in Gaul	177
	Tyranny of Maxentius in Italy and Africa	178
312	Civil War between Conſtantine and Maxentius	181
	Preparations	182
	Conſtantine paſſes the Alps	184
	Battle of Turin	185
	Siege and Battle of Verona	186
	Indolence and Fears of Maxentius	188
312	Victory of Conſtantine near Rome	190
	His Reception	192
	His Conduct at Rome	193
313	His Alliance with Licinius	195
	War between Maximin and Licinius	ib.
	The Defeat of Maximin	196
	His Death	197
	Cruelty of Licinius	ib.
	Unfortunate Fate of the Empreſs Valeria and her Mother	198
314	Quarrel between Conſtantine and Licinius	201
	Firſt civil War between them	202
315	Battle of Cibalis	ib.
	Battle of Mardia	204
	Treaty of Peace	205
315—323.	General Peace, and Laws of Conſtantine	206
322	The Gothic War	209
323	Second civil War between Conſtantine and Licinius	211
323	Battle of Hadrianople	213
	Siege of Byzantium, and naval Victory of Criſpus	214
	Battle of Chryſopolis	216
	Submiſſion and Death of Licinius	ib.
324	Re-union of the Empire	218

CHAP. XV.

The Progreſs of the Chriſtian Religion, and the Sentiments, Manners, Numbers, and Condition of the primitive Chriſtians.

A. D. Page

Importance of the Inquiry . . 219
Its Difficulties . . . . ib.
Five Cauſes of the Growth of Chriſtianity 220
I. THE FIRST CAUSE. Zeal of the Jews 221
Its gradual Increaſe . . . 223
Their Religion better ſuited to Defence than to Conqueſt 224
More liberal Zeal of Chriſtianity . 226
Obſtinacy and Reaſons of the believing Jews 227
The Nazarene Church of Jeruſalem . 229
The Ebionites . . . 231
The Gnoſtics 232
Their Sects, Progreſs, and Influence . 235
The Dæmons conſidered as the Gods of Antiquity 237
Abhorrence of the Chriſtians for Idolatry . 239
Ceremonies . . . . ib.
Arts 240
Feſtivals . . . . . ib.
Zeal for Chriſtianity 242

II. THE SECOND CAUSE. The Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul among the Philoſophers ib.
Among the Pagans of Greece and Rome . 244
Among the Barbarians and the Jews 245, 246
Among the Chriſtians . . 247
Approaching End of the World . . ib.
Doctrine of the Milennium . . 248
Conflagration of Rome and of the World . 250
The Pagans devoted to eternal Punishment . 252
Were often converted by their Fears . 253

A. D. Page

III. THE THIRD CAUSE. Miraculous Powers of the primitive Church . . 254
Their Truth conteſted . . 256
Our Perplexity in defining the miraculous Period ib.
Uſe of the Primitive Miracles . . 258

IV. THE FOURTH CAUSE. Virtues of the firſt Chriſtians 260
Effects of their Repentance . . ib.
Care of their Reputation . . 261
Morality of the Fathers . . 263
Principles of human Nature . . ib.
The primitive Chriſtians condemn Pleaſure and Luxury 264
Their Sentiments concerning Marriage and Chaſtity 266
Their Averſion to the Buſineſs of War and Government 268

V. THE FIFTH CAUSE. The Chriſtians active in the Government of the Church . 270
Its primitive Freedom and Equality . 272
Inſtitution of Bishops as Preſidents of the College of Presbyters 273
Provincial Councils . . . 275
Union of the Church . . 276
Progreſs of Epiſcopal authority . ib.
Pre-eminence of the Metropolitan Churches 278
Ambition of the Roman Pontiff . 279
Laity and Clergy . . . 280
Oblations and Revenue of the Church . 281
Diſtribution of the Revenue . . 284
Excommunications . . . 286
Public Penance . . . 288
The Dignity of Epiſcopal Government . 289
Recapitulation of the Five Cauſes . . 291
Weakneſs of Polytheiſm . . ib.
The Scepticiſm of the Pagan World proved favourable to the new Religion . . 293
And to the Peace and Union of the Roman Empire 295

A. D. Page
Hiſtorical View of the Progreſs of Chriſtianity 296
In the Eaſt . . . . . ib.
The Church of Antioch . . 298
In Egypt 299
In Rome 300
In Africa and the Weſtern Provinces . 302
Beyond the Limits of the Roman Empire . 304
General Proportion of Chriſtians and Pagans 305
Whether the firſt Chriſtians were mean and ignorant, 306
Some Exceptions with regard to Learning 307
———— with regard to Rank and Fortune 308
Chriſtianity moſt favourably received by the Poor and Simple . . . 309
Rejected by ſome eminent Men of the firſt and ſecond centuries . . . 310
Their Neglect of Prophecy . . 311
———— of Miracles . . 312
General Silence concerning the Darkneſs of the Paſſion . . . . ib.

CHAP. XVI.

The Conduct of the Roman Government towards the Chriſtians, from the Reign of Nero to that of Conſtantine.

A. D. Page
Chriſtianity perſecuted by the Roman Emperors 314
Inquiry into their Motives . . 316
Rebellious Spirit of the Jews . 317
Toleration of the Jewiſh Religion . 318
The Jews were a People which followed, the Chriſtians a Sect which deſerted, the Religion of their Fathers . . . 319
Chriſtianity accuſed of Atheiſm, and miſtaken by the People and Philoſophers . . 321
The Union and Aſſemblies of the Chriſtians conſidered as a dangerous Conſpiracy . 323
Their Manners calumniated . . 325

A. D.		Page
	Their imprudent Defence	326
	Idea of the Conduct of the Emperors towards the Chriſtians	328
	They neglected the Chriſtians as a Sect of Jews	330
	The Fire of Rome under the Reign of Nero	332
	Cruel Puniſhment of the Chriſtians as the incendiaries of the City	333
	Remarks on the Paſſage of Tacitus relative to the Perſecution of the Chriſtians by Nero	335
	Oppreſſion of the Jews and Chriſtians by Domitian	339
	Execution of Clemens the Conſul	341
	Ignorance of Pliny concerning the Chriſtians	342
	Trajan and his Succeſſors eſtabliſh a legal Mode of proceeding againſt them	344
	Popular Clamours	345
	Trials of the Chriſtians	347
	Humanity of the Roman Magiſtrates	349
	Inconſiderable Number of Martyrs	350
	Example of Cyprian, Biſhop of Carthage	351
	His Danger and Flight	352
257	His Baniſhment	353
	His Condemnation	354
	His Martyrdom	356
	Various Incitements to Martyrdom	357
	Ardour of the firſt Chriſtians	359
	Gradual Relaxation	361
	Three Methods of eſcaping Martyrdom	ib.
	Alternatives of Severity and Toleration	363
	The ten Perſecutions	364
	Suppoſed Edicts of Tiberius and Marcus Antoninus	ib.
180	State of the Chriſtians in the Reigns of Commodus and Severus	366
211—249	Of the Succeſſors of Severus	368
244	Of Maximin, Philip, and Decius	369
253—260.	Of Valerian, Gallienus, and his Succeſſors	371
260	Paul of Samoſata, his Manners	372
270	He is degraded from the See of Antioch	373
274	The Sentence is executed by Aurelian	374

A. D. Page
284—303. Peace and Proſperity of the Church under Diocletian 375
Progreſs of Zeal and Superſtition among the Pagans 377
Maximian and Galerius punish a few Chriſtian Soldiers 378
Galerius prevails on Diocletian to begin a general Perſecution 380
303 Demolition of the Church of Nicomedia . 381
The firſt Edict againſt the Chriſtians . 382
Zeal and Punishment of a Chriſtian 384
Fire of the Palace of Nicomedia imputed to the Chriſtians 385
Execution of the firſt Edict . . 386
Demolition of the Churches . . 388
Subſequent Edicts . . . 389
303—311. General Idea of the Perſecution . 391
In the Weſtern Provinces, under Conſtantius and Conſtantine . . . . ib.
In Italy and Africa, under Maximian and Severus; and under Maxentius . 392,393
In Illyricum and the Eaſt under Galerius and Maximin 395
311 Galerius publishes an Edict of Toleration . . 396
Peace of the Church 397
Maximin prepares to renew the Perſecution 398
313 End of the Perſecutions . . 400
Probable Account of the Sufferings of the Martyrs and Confeſſors . . . . ib.
Number of Martyrs 403
Concluſion 405

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

DECLINE AND FALL

OF THE

ROMAN EMPIRE.

CHAP. XI.

Reign of Claudius. — Defeat of the Goths. — Victories, Triumph, and Death, of Aurelian.

UNDER the deplorable reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, the empire was oppreſſed and almoſt deſtroyed by the ſoldiers, the tyrants, and the barbarians. It was ſaved by a ſeries of great princes, who derived their obſcure origin from the martial provinces of Illyricum. Within a period of about thirty years, Claudius, Aurelian, Probus, Diocletian and his colleagues, triumphed over the foreign and domeſtic enemies of the ſtate, reeſtabliſhed, with the military diſcipline, the ſtrength of the frontiers, and deſerved the glorious title of Reſtorers of the Roman world. CHAP. XI.

CHAP. XI.

Aureolus invades Italy, is defeated and besieged at Milan.

The removal of an effeminate tyrant made way for a succession of heroes. The indignation of the people imputed all their calamities to Gallienus, and the far greater part were, indeed, the consequence of his dissolute manners and careless administration. He was even destitute of a sense of honour, which so frequently supplies the absence of public virtue; and as long as he was permitted to enjoy the possession of Italy, a victory of the barbarians, the loss of a province, or the rebellion of a general, seldom disturbed the tranquil course of his pleasures. At length, a considerable army, stationed on the Upper Danube, invested with the Imperial purple their leader Aureolus; who disdaining a confined and barren reign over the mountains of Rhætia, passed the Alps, occupied Milan, threatened Rome, and challenged Gallienus to dispute in the field the sovereignty of Italy. The emperor, provoked by the insult, and alarmed by the instant danger, suddenly exerted that latent vigour, which sometimes broke through the indolence of his temper. Forcing himself from the luxury of the palace, he appeared in arms at the head of his legions, and advanced beyond the Po to encounter his competitor. The corrupted name of Pontirolo still preserves the memory of a bridge over the Adda, which, during the action, must have proved an object of the utmost importance to both armies. The Rhætian usurper, after receiving a total defeat and a dangerous wound, retired into Milan. The siege of that great city was immediately formed; the walls were battered

A. D. 268.

with every engine in uſe among the ancients; and Aureolus, doubtful of his internal ſtrength, and hopeleſs of foreign ſuccours, already anticipated the fatal conſequences of unſucceſsful rebellion. CHAP. XI.

His laſt reſource was an attempt to ſeduce the loyalty of the beſiegers. He ſcattered libels through their camp, inviting the troops to deſert an unworthy maſter, who ſacrificed the public happineſs to his luxury, and the lives of his moſt valuable ſubjects to the ſlighteſt ſuſpicions. The arts of Aureolus diffuſed fears and diſcontent among the principal officers of his rival. A conſpiracy was formed by Heraclianus the Prætorian præfect, by Marcian, a general of rank and reputation, and by Cecrops, who commanded a numerous body of Dalmatian guards. The death of Gallienus was reſolved; and notwithſtanding their deſire of firſt terminating the ſiege of Milan, the extreme danger which accompanied every moment's delay, obliged them to haſten the execution of their daring purpoſe. At a late hour of the night, but while the emperor ſtill protracted the pleaſures of the table, an alarm was ſuddenly given, that Aureolus, at the head of all his forces, had made a deſperate ſally from the town; Gallienus, who was never deficient in perſonal bravery, ſtarted from his ſilken couch, and, without allowing himſelf time either to put on his armour or to aſſemble his guards, he mounted on horſeback, and rode full ſpeed toward the ſuppoſed place of the attack. Encompaſſed by his declared or concealed enemies, he ſoon, amidſt the nocturnal tumult, received a mortal dart from

CHAP. XI. A. D. 268. March 20. Death of Gallienus.

an uncertain hand. Before he expired, a patriotic ſentiment riſing in the mind of Gallienus, induced him to name a deſerving ſucceſſor, and it was his laſt requeſt, that the Imperial ornaments ſhould be delivered to Claudius, who then commanded a detached army in the neighbourhood of Pavia. The report at leaſt was diligently propagated, and the order cheerfully obeyed by the conſpirators, who had already agreed to place Claudius on the throne. On the firſt news of the emperor's death, the troops expreſſed ſome ſuſpicion and reſentment, till the one was removed, and the other aſſuaged, by a donative of twenty pieces of gold to each ſoldier. They then ratified the election, and acknowledged the merit of their new ſovereign [1].

Character and elevation of the emperor Claudius.

The obſcurity which covered the origin of Claudius, though it was afterwards embellished by ſome flattering fictions [2], ſufficiently betrays the meanneſs of his birth. We can only diſcover that he was a native of one of the provinces bordering on the Danube; that his youth was ſpent in arms, and that his modeſt valour attracted the favour and confidence of Decius. The ſenate and people already conſidered him as an excellent officer, equal to the moſt important truſts; and cenſured the inattention of Valerian, who ſuffered him to remain in the ſubordinate ſtation of a tribune. But it was not long before that emperor diſtinguished the merit of Claudius, by declaring him general and chief of the Illyrian frontier, with the command of all the troops in Thrace, Mæſia, Dacia,

Pannonia, and Dalmatia, the appointments of the præfect of Egypt, the eſtabliſhment of the proconſul of Africa, and the ſure proſpect of the conſulſhip. By his victories over the Goths, he deſerved from the ſenate the honour of a ſtatue, and excited the jealous apprehenſions of Gallienus. It was impoſſible that a ſoldier could eſteem ſo diſſolute a ſovereign, nor is it eaſy to conceal a juſt contempt. Some unguarded expreſſions which dropt from Claudius, were officiously tranſmitted to the royal ear. The emperor's anſwer to an officer of confidence, deſcribes in very lively colours his own character and that of the times. "There is not any thing „ capable of giving me more ſerious concern, „ than the intelligence contained in your laſt diſ„ patch [4]: that ſome malicious ſuggeſtions have „ indiſpoſed towards us the mind of our friend „ and *parent* Claudius. As you regard your al„ legiance, uſe every means to appeaſe his re„ ſentment, but conduct your negociation with „ ſecrecy; let it not reach the knowledge of the „ Dacian troops; they are already provoked, and „ it might inflame their fury. I myſelf have ſent „ him ſome preſents: be it your care that he accept „ them with pleaſure. Above all, let him not „ ſuſpect that I am made acquainted with his im„ prudence. The fear of my anger might urge him „ to deſperate counſels [5]." The preſents which accompanied this humble epiſtle, in which the monarch ſolicited a reconciliation with his diſcontented ſubject, conſiſted of a conſiderable ſum of money, a ſplendid wardrobe, and a valuable ſervice

CHAP. XI.

CHAP. XI.

of ſilver and gold plate. By ſuch arts Gallienus ſoftened the indignation, and diſpelled the fears, of his Illyrian general; and, during the remainder of that reign, the formidable ſword of Claudius was always drawn in the cauſe of a maſter whom he deſpiſed. At laſt, indeed, he received from the conſpirators the bloody purple of Gallienus: but he had been abſent from their camp and counſels; and however he might applaud the deed, we may candidly preſume that he was innocent of the knowledge of it [6]. When Claudius aſcended the throne, he was about fifty-four years of age.

Death of Aureolus.

The ſiege of Milan was ſtill continued, and Aureolus ſoon diſcovered, that the ſucceſs of his artifices had only raiſed up a more determined adverſary. He attempted to negociate with Claudius a treaty of alliance and partition. "Tell „ him," replied the intrepid emperor, "that „ ſuch propoſals ſhould have been made to Gal- „ lienus; *he*, perhaps, might have liſtened to „ them with patience, and accepted a colleague „ as deſpicable as himſelf [7]." This ſtern refuſal, and a laſt unſucceſsful effort, obliged Aureolus to yield the city and himſelf to the diſcretion of the conqueror. The judgment of the army pronounced him worthy of death, and Claudius, after a feeble reſiſtance, conſented to the execution of the ſentence. Nor was the zeal of the ſenate leſs ardent in the cauſe of their new ſovereign. They ratified, perhaps with a ſincere tranſport of zeal, the election of Claudius; and as his predeceſſor had ſhewn himſelf the perſonal enemy of their

CHAP. XI.

order, they exerciſed under the name of juſtice a ſevere revenge againſt his friends and family. The ſenate was permitted to diſcharge the ungrateful office of punishment, and the emperor reſerved for himſelf the pleaſure and merit of obtaining by his interceſſion a general act of indemnity [8].

Clemency and juſtice of Claudius.

Such oſtentatious clemency diſcovers leſs of the real character of Claudius, than a trifling circumſtance in which he ſeems to have conſulted only the dictates of his heart. The frequent rebellions of the provinces had involved almoſt every perſon in the guilt of treaſon, almoſt every eſtate in the caſe of confiſcation; and Gallienus often diſplayed his liberality, by diſtributing among his officers the property of his ſubjects. On the acceſſion of Claudius, an old woman threw herſelf at his feet, and complained that a general of the late emperor had obtained an arbitrary grant of her patrimony. This general was Claudius himſelf, who had not entirely eſcaped the contagion of the times. The emperor blushed at the reproach, but deſerved the confidence which she had repoſed in his equity. The confeſſion of his fault was accompanied with immediate and ample reſtitution [9].

He undertakes the reformation of the army.

In the arduous task which Claudius had undertaken, of reſtoring the empire to its ancient ſplendour, it was firſt neceſſary to revive among his troops a ſenſe of order and obedience. With the authority of a veteran commander, he repreſented to them, that the relaxation of diſcipline had introduced a long train of diſorders, the effects of which were at length experienced by the ſoldiers

CHAP. XI.

themſelves; that a people ruined by oppreſſion, and indolent from deſpair, could no longer ſupply a numerous army with the means of luxury, or even of ſubſiſtence; that the danger of each individual had increaſed with the deſpotiſm of the military order, ſince princes who tremble on the throne, will guard their ſafety by the inſtant ſacrifice of every obnoxious ſubject. The emperor expatiated on the miſchiefs of a lawleſs caprice which the ſoldiers could only gratify at the expence of their own blood; as their ſeditious elections had ſo frequently been followed by civil wars, which conſumed the flower of the legions, either in the field of battle, or in the cruel abuſe of victory. He painted in the moſt lively colours the exhauſted ſtate of the treaſury, the deſolation of the provinces, the diſgrace of the Roman name, and the inſolent triumph of rapacious barbarians. It was againſt thoſe barbarians, he declared, that he intended to point the firſt effort of their arms. Tetricus might reign for a while over the Weſt, and even Zenobia might preſerve the dominion of the Eaſt [10]. Theſe uſurpers were his perſonal adverſaries; nor could he think of indulging any private reſentment till he had ſaved an empire, whoſe impending ruin would, unleſs it was timely prevented, crush both the army and the people.

A. D. 269. The Goths invade the empire.

The various nations of Germany and Sarmatia, who fought under the Gothic ſtandard, had already collected an armament more formidable than any which had yet iſſued from the Euxine. On the banks of the Nieſter, one of the great rivers

that discharge themselves into that sea, they constructed a fleet of two thousand, or even of six thousand vessels [11]; numbers which, however incredible they may seem, would have been insufficient to transport their pretended army of three hundred and twenty thousand barbarians. Whatever might be the real strength of the Goths, the vigour and success of the expedition were not adequate to the greatness of the preparations. In their passage through the Bosphorus, the unskilful pilots were overpowered by the violence of the current; and while the multitude of their ships were crowded in a narrow channel, many were dashed against each other, or against the shore. The barbarians made several descents on the coasts both of Europe and Asia; but the open country was already plundered, and they were repulsed with shame and loss from the fortified cities which they assaulted. A spirit of discouragement and division arose in the fleet, and some of their chiefs sailed away towards the islands of Crete and Cyprus; but the main body pursuing a more steady course, anchored at length near the foot of mount Athos, and assaulted the city of Thessalonica, the wealthy capital of all the Macedonian provinces. Their attacks, in which they displayed a fierce but artless bravery, were soon interrupted by the rapid approach of Claudius, hastening to a scene of action that deserved the presence of a warlike prince at the head of the remaining powers of the empire. Impatient for battle, the Goths immediately broke up their camp, relinquished the siege of Thessalonica, left

CHAP. XI.

CHAP. XI.

their navy at the foot of mount Athos, traverſed the hills of Macedonia, and preſſed forwards to engage the laſt defence of Italy.

Diſtreſs and firmneſs of Claudius.

We ſtill poſſeſs an original letter addreſſed by Claudius to the ſenate and people on this memorable occaſion. "Conſcript fathers," ſays the emperor, "know that three hundred and twenty „ thouſand Goths have invaded the Roman ter- „ ritory. If I vanquish them, your gratitude „ will reward my ſervices. Should I fall, remember „ that I am the ſucceſſor of Gallienus. The whole „ republic is fatigued and exhauſted. We ſhall „ fight after Valerian, after Ingenuus, Regillianus, „ Lollianus, Poſthumus, Celſus, and a thouſand „ others, whom a juſt contempt for Gallienus „ provoked into rebellion. We are in want of „ darts, of ſpears, and of shields. The ſtrength „ of the empire, Gaul, and Spain, are uſurped „ by Tetricus, and we blush to acknowledge that „ the archers of the Eaſt ſerve under the banners „ of Zenobia. Whatever we ſhall perform, will „ be ſufficiently great [11]." The melancholy firmneſs of this epiſtle announces a hero careleſs of his fate, conſcious of his danger, but ſtill deriving a well-grounded hope from the reſources of his own mind.

His victory over the Goths.

The event ſurpaſſed his own expectations and thoſe of the world. By the moſt ſignal victories he delivered the empire from this hoſt of barbarians, and was diſtinguished by poſterity under the glorious appellation of the Gothic Claudius. The imperfect hiſtorians of an irregular war [12] do

not enable us to deſcribe the order and circumſtances of his exploits; but, if we could be indulged in the alluſion, we might diſtribute into three acts this memorable tragedy. I. The deciſive battle was fought near Naiſſus, a city of Dardania. The legions at firſt gave way, oppreſſed by numbers, and diſmayed by misfortunes. Their ruin was inevitable, had not the abilities of their emperor prepared a ſeaſonable relief. A large detachment riſing out of the ſecret and difficult paſſes of the mountains, which, by his order, they had occupied, ſuddenly aſſailed the rear of the victorious Goths. The favorable inſtant was improved by the activity of Claudius. He revived the courage of his troops, reſtored their ranks, and preſſed the barbarians on every ſide. Fifty thouſand men are reported to have been ſlain in the battle of Naiſſus. Several large bodies of barbarians, covering their retreat with a moveable fortification of waggons, retired, or rather eſcaped, from the field of ſlaughter. II. We may preſume that ſome inſurmountable difficulty, the fatigue, perhaps, or the diſobedience, of the conquerors, prevented Claudius from completing in one day the deſtruction of the Goths. The war was diffuſed over the provinces of Mæſia, Thrace and Macedonia, and its operations drawn out into a variety of marches, ſurpriſes, and tumultuary engagements, as well by ſea as by land. When the Romans ſuffered any loſs, it was commonly occaſioned by their own cowardice or raſhneſs; but the ſuperior talents of the emperor, his perfect knowledge of the coun-

CHAP. XI.

CHAP. XI.

try, and his judicious choice of meaſures as well as officers, aſſured on moſt occaſions the ſucceſs of his arms. The immenſe booty, the fruit of ſo many victories, conſiſted for the greater part of cattle and ſlaves. A ſelect body of the Gothic youth was received among the Imperial troops; the remainder was ſold into ſervitude; and ſo conſiderable was the number of female captives, that every ſoldier obtained to his ſhare two or three women. A circumſtance from which we may conclude, that the invaders entertained ſome deſigns of ſettlement as well as of plunder; ſince even in a naval expedition they were accompanied by their families. III. The loſs of their fleet, which was either taken or ſunk, had intercepted the retreat of the Goths. A vaſt circle of Roman poſts diſtributed with skill, ſupported with firmneſs, and gradually cloſing towards a common centre, forced the barbarians into the moſt inacceſſible parts of mount Hæmus, where they found a ſafe refuge, but a very ſcanty ſubſiſtence. During the courſe of a rigorous winter, in which they were beſieged by the emperor's troops, famine and peſtilence, deſertion and the ſword, continually diminished
A. D. 270. the impriſoned multitude. On the return of ſpring, nothing appeared in arms except a hardy and deſperate band, the remnant of that mighty hoſt which had embarked at the mouth of the Nieſter.

March. Death of the emperor, who recommends

The peſtilence which ſwept away ſuch numbers of the barbarians, at length proved fatal to their conqueror. After a short but glorious reign of two years, Claudius expired at Sirmium, amidſt the

tears and acclamations of his ſubjects. In his laſt illneſs, he convened the principal officers of the ſtate and army, and in their preſence recommended Aurelian, one of his generals, as the moſt deſerving of the throne, and the beſt qualified to execute the great deſign which he himſelf had been permitted only to undertake. The virtues of Claudius, his valour, affability [14], juſtice, and temperance, his love of fame and of his country, place him in that ſhort liſt of emperors who added luſtre to the Roman purple. Thoſe virtues, however, were celebrated with peculiar zeal and complacency by the courtly writers of the age of Conſtantine, who was the great grandſon of Criſpus, the elder brother of Claudius. The voice of flattery was ſoon taught to repeat, that the gods, who ſo haſtily had ſnatched Claudius from the earth, rewarded his merit and piety by the perpetual eſtabliſhment of the empire in his family [15].

CHAP. XI. Aurelian for his ſucceſſor.

Notwithſtanding theſe oracles, the greatneſs of the Flavian family (a name which it had pleaſed them to aſſume) was deferred above twenty years, and the elevation of Claudius occaſioned the immediate ruin of his brother Quintilius, who poſſeſſed not ſufficient moderation or courage to deſcend into the private ſtation to which the patriotiſm of the late emperor had condemned him. Without delay or reflection, he aſſumed the purple at Aquileia, where he commanded a conſiderable force; and though his reign laſted only ſeventeen days, he had time to obtain the ſanction of the ſenate, and to experience a mutiny

The attempt and fall of Quintilius.

CHAP. XI.

of the troops. As ſoon as he was informed that the great army of the Danube had inveſted the well-known valour of Aurelian with Imperial power, he ſunk under the fame and merit of his rival; and ordering his veins to be opened, prudently withdrew himſelf from the unequal conteſt [16].

April.

Origin and ſervices of Aurelian.

The general deſign of this work will not permit us minutely to relate the actions of every emperor after he aſcended the throne, much leſs to deduce the various fortunes of his private life. We ſhall only obſerve, that the father of Aurelian was a peaſant of the territory of Sirmium, who occupied a ſmall farm, the property of Aurelius, a rich ſenator. His warlike ſon inliſted in the troops as a common ſoldier, ſucceſſively roſe to the rank of a centurion, a tribune, the præfect of a legion, the inſpector of the camp, the general, or, as it was then called, the duke, of a frontier; and at length, during the Gothic war, exerciſed the important office of commander in chief of the cavalry. In every ſtation he diſtinguished himſelf by matchleſs valour [17], rigid diſcipline, and ſucceſsful conduct. He was inveſted with the conſulſhip by the emperor Valerian, who ſtyles him, in the pompous language of that age, the deliverer of Illyricum, the reſtorer of Gaul, and the rival of the Scipios. At the recommendation of Valerian, a ſenator of the higheſt rank and merit, Ulpius Crinitus, whoſe blood was derived from the ſame ſource as that of Trajan, adopted the Pannonian peaſant, gave him his daughter in marriage, and relieved with his ample fortune the

honourable poverty which Aurelian had preſerved inviolate [11]. CHAP. XI.

The reign of Aurelian laſted only four years and about nine months; but every inſtant of that ſhort period was filled by ſome memorable atchievement. He put an end to the Gothic war, chaſtiſed the Germans who invaded Italy, recovered Gaul, Spain, and Britain out of the hands of Tetricus, and deſtroyed the proud monarchy which Zenobia had erected in the Eaſt, on the ruins of the afflicted empire. Aurelian's ſucceſsful reign.

It was the rigid attention of Aurelian, even to the minuteſt articles of diſcipline, which beſtowed ſuch uninterrupted ſucceſs on his arms His military regulations are contained in a very conciſe epiſtle to one of his inferior officers, who is commanded to enforce them, as he wishes to become a tribune, or as he is deſirous to live. Gaming, drinking, and the arts of divination, were ſeverely prohibited. Aurelian expected that his ſoldiers ſhould be modeſt, frugal, and laborious; that their armour ſhould be conſtantly kept bright, their weapons ſharp, their clothing and horſes ready for immediate ſervice; that they ſhould live in their quarters with chaſtity and ſobriety, without damaging the corn fields, without ſtealing even a ſheep, a fowl, or a bunch of grapes, without exacting from their landlords, either ſalt, or oil, or wood. „ The public allowance," continues the emperor, „ is ſufficient for their ſupport; their wealth „ ſhould be collected from the ſpoil of the enemy, „ not from the tears of the provincials [12]." A His ſevere diſcipline.

CHAP. XI.

ſingle inſtance will ſerve to diſplay the rigour, and even cruelty, of Aurelian. One of the ſoldiers had ſeduced the wife of his hoſt. The guilty wretch was faſtened to two trees forcibly drawn towards each other, and his limbs were torn aſunder by their ſudden ſeparation. A few ſuch examples impreſſed a ſalutary conſternation. The punishments of Aurelian were terrible; but he had ſeldom occaſion to punish more than once the ſame offence. His own conduct gave a ſanction to his laws, and the ſeditious legions dreaded a chief who had learned to obey, and who was worthy to command.

He concludes a treaty with the Goths,

The death of Claudius had revived the fainting ſpirit of the Goths. The troops which guarded the paſſes of Mount Hæmus, and the banks of the Danube, had been drawn away by the apprehenſion of a civil war; and it ſeems probable that the remaining body of the Gothic and Vandalic tribes embraced the favourable opportunity, abandoned their ſettlements of the Ukraine, traverſed the rivers, and ſwelled with new multitudes the deſtroying hoſt of their countrymen. Their united numbers were at length encountered by Aurelian, and the bloody and doubtful conflict ended only with the approach of night [40]. Exhauſted by ſo many calamities, which they had mutually endured and inflicted during a twenty years war, the Goths and the Romans conſented to a laſting and beneficial treaty. It was earneſtly ſolicited by the barbarians, and cheerfully ratified by the legions, to whoſe ſuffrage the prudence of Aurelian referred the deciſion

of

CHAP. XI.

of that important queſtion. The Gothic nation engaged to ſupply the armies of Rome with a body of two thouſand auxiliaries, conſiſting entirely of cavalry, and ſtipulated in return an undiſturbed retreat, with a regular market as far as the Danube, provided by the emperor's care, but at their own expence. The treaty was obſerved with ſuch religious fidelity, that when a party of five hundred men ſtraggled from the camp in queſt of plunder, the king or general of the barbarians commanded that the guilty leader ſhould be apprehended and ſhot to death with darts, as a victim devoted to the ſanctity of their engagements. It is, however, not unlikely, that the precaution of Aurelian, who had exacted as hoſtages the ſons and daughters of the Gothic chiefs, contributed ſomething to this pacific temper. The youths he trained in the exerciſe of arms, and near his own perſon: to the damſels he gave a liberal and Roman education, and by beſtowing them in marriage on ſome of his principal officers, gradually introduced between the two nations the cloſeſt and moſt endearing connexions [21].

and reſigns to them the province of Dacia.

But the moſt important condition of peace was underſtood rather than expreſſed in the treaty. Aurelian withdrew the Roman forces from Dacia, and tacitly relinquished that great province to the Goths and Vandals [22]. His manly judgment convinced him of the ſolid advantages, and taught him to deſpiſe the ſeeming diſgrace, of thus contracting the frontiers of the monarchy. The Dacian ſubjects, removed from thoſe diſtant

CHAP. XI. poſſeſſions which they were unable to cultivate or defend, added ſtrength and populouſneſs to the ſouthern ſide of the Danube. A fertile territory, which the repetition of barbarous inroads had changed into a deſert, was yielded to their induſtry, and a new province of Dacia ſtill preſerved the memory of Trajan's conqueſts. The old country of that name detained, however, a conſiderable number of its inhabitants, who dreaded exile more than a Gothic maſter[21]. Theſe degenerate Romans continued to ſerve the empire, whoſe allegiance they had renounced by introducing among their conquerors the firſt notions of agriculture, the uſeful arts, and the conveniences of civiliſed life. An intercourſe of commerce and language was gradually eſtabliſhed between the oppoſite banks of the Danube; and after Dacia became an independent ſtate, it often proved the firmeſt barrier of the empire againſt the invaſions of the ſavages of the North. A ſenſe of intereſt attached theſe more ſettled barbarians to the alliance of Rome, and a permanent intereſt very frequently ripens into ſincere and uſeful friendſhip. This various colony, which filled the ancient province, and was inſenſibly blended into one great people, ſtill acknowledged the ſuperior renown and authority of the Gothic tribe, and claimed the fancied honour of a Scandinavian origin. At the ſame time the lucky though accidental reſemblance of the name of Gæta, infuſed among the credulous Goths a vain perſuaſion, that, in a remote age, their own anceſtors, already ſeated in the Dacian provin-

ces, had received the inſtructions of Zamolxis, and checked the victorious arms of Seſoſtris and Darius [24]. CHAP. XI.

While the vigorous and moderate conduct of Aurelian reſtored the Illyrian frontier, the nation of the Alemanni [25] violated the conditions of peace, which either Gallienus had purchaſed, or Claudius had impoſed, and inflamed by their impatient youth, ſuddenly flew to arms. Forty thouſand horſe appeared in the field [26], and the numbers of the infantry doubled thoſe of the cavalry [27]. The firſt objects of their avarice were a few cities of the Rhætian frontier; but their hopes ſoon riſing with ſucceſs, the rapid march of the Alemanni traced a line of devaſtation from the Danube to the Po [28]. The Alemannic war.

The emperor was almoſt at the ſame time informed of the irruption, and of the retreat, of the barbarians. Collecting an active body of troops, he marched with ſilence and celerity along the skirts of the Hercynian foreſt; and the Alemanni, laden with the ſpoils of Italy, arrived at the Danube, without ſuſpecting, that on the oppoſite bank, and in an advantageous poſt, a Roman army lay concealed and prepared to intercept their return. Aurelian indulged the fatal ſecurity of the barbarians, and permitted about half their forces to paſs the river without diſturbance and without precaution. Their ſituation and aſtoniſhment gave him an eaſy victory; his skilful conduct improved the advantage. Diſpoſing the legions in a ſemicircular form, he advanced the two horns of the A. D. 270. September.

CHAP. XI.

creſcent acroſs the Danube, and wheeling them on a ſudden towards the centre, incloſed the rear of the German hoſt. The diſmayed barbarians, on whatſoever ſide they caſt their eyes, beheld with deſpair, a waſted country, a deep and rapid ſtream, a victorious and implacable enemy.

Reduced to this diſtreſſed condition, the Alemanni no longer diſdained to ſue for peace. Aurelian received their ambaſſadors at the head of his camp, and with every circumſtance of martial pomp that could diſplay the greatneſs, and diſcipline of Rome. The legions ſtood to their arms in well-ordered ranks and awful ſilence. The principal commanders, diſtinguiſhed by the enſigns of their rank, appeared on horſeback on either ſide of the Imperial throne. Behind the throne, the conſecrated images of the emperor, and his predeceſſors [29], the golden eagles, and the various titles of the legions, engraved in letters of gold, were exalted in the air on lofty pikes covered with ſilver. When Aurelian aſſumed his ſeat, his manly grace and majeſtic figure [30] taught the barbarians to revere the perſon as well as the purple of their conqueror. The ambaſſadors fell proſtrate on the ground in ſilence. They were commanded to riſe, and permitted to ſpeak. By the aſſiſtance of interpreters they extenuated their perfidy, magnified their exploits, expatiated on the viciſſitudes of fortune and the advantages of peace, and, with an ill-timed confidence, demanded a large ſubſidy, as the price of the alliance which they offered to the Romans. The anſwer of the emperor was ſtern and imperious. He treated their

offer with contempt, and their demand with indignation, reproached the barbarians, that they were as ignorant of the arts of war as of the laws of peace, and finally diſmiſſed them with the choice only of ſubmitting to his unconditioned mercy, or awaiting the utmoſt ſeverity of his reſentment [11]. Aurelian had reſigned a diſtant province to the Goths; but it was dangerous to truſt or to pardon theſe perfidious barbarians, whoſe formidable power kept Italy itſelf in perpetual alarms. CHAP. XI.

Immediately after this conference, it ſhould ſeem that ſome unexpected emergency required the emperor's preſence in Pannonia. He devolved on his lieutenants the care of finiſhing the deſtruction of the Alemanni, either by the ſword, or by the ſurer operation of famine. But an active deſpair has often triumphed over the indolent aſſurance of ſucceſs. The barbarians, finding it impoſſible to traverſe the Danube and the Roman camp, broke through the poſts in their rear, which were more feebly or leſs carefully guarded; and with incredible diligence, but by a different road, returned towards the mountains of Italy [12]. Aurelian, who conſidered the war as totally extinguished, received the mortifying intelligence of the eſcape of the Alemanni, and of the ravage which they already committed in the territory of Milan. The legions were commanded to follow, with as much expedition as thoſe heavy bodies were capable of exerting, the rapid flight of an enemy, whoſe infantry and cavalry moved with almoſt equal ſwiftneſs. A few

The Alemanni invade Italy.

CHAP. XI.

days afterwards the emperor himſelf marched to the relief of Italy, at the head of a choſen body of auxiliaries (among whom were the hoſtages and cavalry of the Vandals), and of all the Prætorian guards who had ſerved in the wars on the Danube [13].

and are at laſt vanquished by Aurelian.

As the light troops of the Alemanni had ſpread themſelves from the Alps to the Apennine, the inceſſant vigilance of Aurelian and his officers was exerciſed in the diſcovery, the attack, and the purſuit of the numerous detachments. Notwithſtanding this deſultory war, three conſiderable battles are mentioned, in which the principal force of both armies was obſtinately engaged [14]. The ſucceſs was various. In the firſt, fought near Placentia, the Romans received ſo ſevere a blow, that, according to the expreſſion of a writer extremely partial to Aurelian, the immediate diſſolution of the empire was apprehended [15]. The crafty barbarians, who had lined the woods, ſuddenly attacked the legions in the duſk of the evening, and, it is moſt probable, after the fatigue and diſorder of a long march. The fury of their charge was irreſiſtible; but at length, after a dreadful ſlaughter, the patient firmneſs of the emperor rallied his troops, and reſtored, in ſome degree, the honour of his arms. The ſecond battle was fought near Fano in Umbria; on the ſpot which, five hundred years before, had been fatal to the brother of Hannibal [16]. Thus far the ſucceſsful Germans had advanced along the Æmilian and Flaminian way, with a deſign of ſacking the defenceleſs miſtreſs

of the world. But Aurelian, who, watchful for the ſafety of Rome, ſtill hung on their rear, found in this place the deciſive moment, of giving them a total and irretrievable defeat [17]. The flying remnant of their hoſt was exterminated in a third and laſt battle near Pavia; and Italy was delivered from the inroads of the Alemanni. CHAP. XI.

Superſtitious ceremonies.

Fear has been the original parent of ſuperſtition, and every new calamity urges trembling mortals to deprecate the wrath of their inviſible enemies. Though the beſt hope of the republic was in the valour and conduct of Aurelian, yet ſuch was the public conſternation, when the barbarians were hourly expected at the gates of Rome, that, by a decree of the ſenate, the Sibylline books were conſulted. Even the emperor himſelf, from a motive either of religion or of policy, recommended this ſalutary meaſure, chided the tardineſs of the ſenate [18], and offered to ſupply whatever expence, whatever animals, whatever captives of any nation, the gods ſhould require. Notwithſtanding this liberal offer, it does not appear, that any human victims expiated with their blood the ſins of the Roman people. The Sibylline books enjoined ceremonies of a more harmleſs nature, proceſſions of prieſts in white robes, attended by a chorus of youths and virgins; luſtrations of the city and adjacent country; and ſacrifices, whoſe powerful influence diſabled the barbarians from paſſing the myſtic ground on which they had been celebrated. However puerile in themſelves, theſe ſuperſtitious arts were ſubſervient to the ſucceſs of the war; and if, in the deciſive

[17] A. D. 271, January 11.

CHAP. XI.

battle of Fano, the Alemanni fancied they saw an army of spectres combating on the side of Aurelian, he received a real and effectual aid from this imaginary reinforcement [39].

Fortifications of Rome.

But whatever confidence might be placed in ideal ramparts, the experience of the past, and the dread of the future, induced the Romans to construct fortifications of a grosser and more substantial kind. The seven hills of Rome had been surrounded, by the successors of Romulus, with an ancient wall of more than thirteen miles [40]. The vast inclosure may seem disproportioned to the strength and numbers of the infant state. But it was necessary to secure an ample extent of pasture and arable land, against the frequent and sudden incursions of the tribes of Latium, the perpetual enemies of the republic. With the progress of Roman greatness, the city and its inhabitants gradually increased, filled up the vacant space, pierced through the useless walls, covered the field of Mars, and, on every side, followed the public highways in long and beautiful suburbs [41]. The extent of the new walls, erected by Aurelian, and finished in the reign of Probus, was magnified by popular estimation to near fifty [42], but is reduced by accurate measurement to about twenty-one, miles [43]. It was a great but melancholy labour, since the defence of the capital betrayed the decline of the monarchy. The Romans of a more prosperous age, who trusted to the arms of the legions the safety of the frontier camps [44], were very far from entertaining a suspicion, that

it would ever become neceſſary to fortify the ſeat of empire againſt the inroads of the barbarians [45].

Aurelian ſuppreſſes the two uſurpers.

The victory of Claudius over the Goths, and the ſucceſs of Aurelian againſt the Alemanni, had already reſtored to the arms of Rome their ancient ſuperiority over the barbarous nations of the North. To chaſtiſe domeſtic tyrants, and to reunite the diſmembered parts of the empire, was a task reſerved for the ſecond of thoſe warlike emperors. Though he was acknowledged by the ſenate and people, the frontiers of Italy, Africa, Illyricum, and Thrace, confined the limits of his reign. Gaul, Spain, and Britain, Egypt, Syria, and Aſia Minor, were ſtill poſſeſſed by two rebels, who alone, out of ſo numerous a liſt, had hitherto eſcaped the dangers of their ſituation; and to complete the ignominy of Rome, theſe rival thrones had been uſurped by women.

Succeſſion of uſurpers in Gaul.

A rapid ſucceſſion of monarchs had ariſen and fallen in the provinces of Gaul. The rigid virtues of Poſthumus ſerved only to haſten his deſtruction. After ſuppreſſing a competitor, who had aſſumed the purple at Mentz, he refuſed to gratify his troops with the plunder of the rebellious city; and, in the ſeventh year of his reign, became the victim of their diſappointed avarice [46]. The death of Victorinus, his friend and aſſociate, was occaſioned by a leſs worthy cauſe. The ſhining accompliſhments [47] of that prince were ſtained by a licentious paſſion, which he indulged in acts of violence, with too little regard to the laws of ſociety, or even to thoſe of love [48]. He was ſlain

CHAP. XI.

at Cologne, by a conſpiracy of jealous husbands, whoſe revenge would have appeared more juſtifiable, had they ſpared the innocence of his ſon. After the murder of ſo many valiant princes, it is ſomewhat remarkable, that a female for a long time controlled the fierce legions of Gaul, and ſtill more ſingular that ſhe was the mother of the unfortunate Victorinus. The arts and treaſures of Victoria enabled her ſucceſſively to place Marius and Tetricus on the throne, and to reign with a manly vigour under the name of thoſe dependent emperors. Money of copper, of ſilver, and of gold, was coined in her name; ſhe aſſumed the titles of Auguſta and Mother of the Camps: her power ended only with her life; but her life was perhaps ſhortened by the ingratitude of Tetricus [49].

The reign and defeat of Tetricus.

When, at the inſtigation of his ambitious patroneſs, Tetricus aſſumed the enſigns of royalty, he was governor of the peaceful province of Aquitaine, an employment ſuited to his character and education. He reigned four or five years over Gaul, Spain, and Britain, the ſlave and ſovereign of a licentious army, whom he dreaded, and by whom he was deſpiſed. The valour and fortune of Aurelian at length opened the proſpect of a deliverance. He ventured to diſcloſe his melancholy ſituation, and conjured the emperor to haſten to the relief of his unhappy rival. Had this ſecret correſpondence reached the ears of the ſoldiers, it would moſt probably have coſt Tetricus his life; nor could he reſign the ſceptre of the Weſt, without committing an act of treaſon againſt himſelf. He

A. D. 271. Summer.

affected the appearances of a civil war, led his forces into the field againſt Aurelian, poſted them in the moſt diſadvantageous manner, betrayed his own counſels to the enemy, and with a few choſen friends deſerted in the beginning of the action. The rebel legions, though diſordered and diſmayed by the unexpected treachery of their chief, defended themſelves with deſperate valour, till they were cut in pieces almoſt to a man, in this bloody and memorable battle, which was fought near Chalons in Champagne [10]. The retreat of the irregular auxiliaries, Franks and Batavians [11], whom the conqueror ſoon compelled or perſuaded to repaſs the Rhine, reſtored the general tranquillity, and the power of Aurelian was acknowledged from the wall of Antoninus to the columns of Hercules.

CHAP. XI.

As early as the reign of Claudius, the city of Autun, alone and unaſſiſted, had ventured to declare againſt the legions of Gaul. After a ſiege of ſeven months, they ſtormed and plundered that unfortunate city, already waſted by famine [12]. Lyons, on the contrary, had reſiſted with obſtinate diſaffection the arms of Aurelian. We read of the punishment of Lyons [13], but there is not any mention of the rewards of Autun. Such, indeed, is the policy of civil war: ſeverely to remember injuries, and to forget the moſt important ſervices. Revenge is profitable, gratitude is expenſive.

Aurelian had no ſooner ſecured the perſon and provinces of Tetricus, than he turned his arms againſt Zenobia, the celebrated queen of Palmyra and the Eaſt. Modern Europe has produced ſeveral

A. D. 272. Character of Zenobia;

CHAP. XI.

illuſtrious women who have ſuſtained with glory the weight of empire; nor is our own age deſtitute of ſuch diſtinguished characters. But if we except the doubtful atchievements of Semiramis, Zenobia is perhaps the only female, whoſe ſuperior genius broke through the ſervile indolence impoſed on her ſex by the climate and manners of Aſia [54]. She claimed her deſcent from the Macedonian kings of Egypt, equalled in beauty her anceſtor Cleopatra, and far ſurpaſſed that princeſs in chaſtity [55] and valour. Zenobia was eſteemed the moſt lovely as well as the moſt heroic of her ſex. She was of a dark complexion (for in ſpeaking of a lady, theſe trifles become important). Her teeth were of a pearly whiteneſs, and her large black eyes ſparkled with uncommon fire, tempered by the moſt attractive ſweetneſs. Her voice was ſtrong and harmonious. Her manly underſtanding was ſtrengthened and adorned by ſtudy. She was not ignorant of the Latin tongue, but poſſeſſed in equal perfection the Greek, the Syriac, and the Egyptian languages. She had drawn up for her own uſe an epitome of oriental hiſtory, and familiarly compared the beauties of Homer and Plato under the tuition of the ſublime Longinus.

her beauty and learning;

This accomplished woman gave her hand to Odenathus, who from a private ſtation raiſed himſelf to the dominion of the Eaſt. She ſoon became the friend and companion of a hero. In the intervals of war, Odenathus paſſionately delighted in the exerciſe of hunting; he purſued with ardour the wild beaſts of the deſert, lions, panthers,

her valour.

and bears; and the ardour of Zenobia in that dangerous amuſement was not inferior to his own. She had inured her conſtitution to fatigue, diſdained the uſe of a covered carriage, generally appeared on horſeback in a military habit, and ſometimes marched ſeveral miles on foot at the head of the troops. The ſucceſs of Odenathus was in a great meaſure aſcribed to her incomparable prudence and fortitude. Their ſplendid victories over the Great King, whom they twice purſued as far as the gates of Cteſiphon, laid the foundations of their united fame and power. The armies which they commanded, and the provinces which they had ſaved, acknowledged not any other ſovereigns than their invincible chiefs. The ſenate and people of Rome revered a ſtranger who had avenged their captive emperor, and even the inſenſible ſon of Valerian accepted Odenathus for his legitimate colleague

CHAP. XI.

After a ſucceſsful expedition againſt the Gothic plunderers of Aſia, the Palmyrenian prince returned to the city of Emeſa in Syria. Invincible in war, he was there cut off by domeſtic treaſon, and his favourite amuſement of hunting was the cauſe, or at leaſt the occaſion, of his death [*]. His nephew, Mæonius, preſumed to dart his javelin before that of his uncle; and though admonished of his error, repeated the ſame inſolence. As a monarch, and as a ſportſman, Odenathus was provoked, took away his horſe, a mark of ignominy among the barbarians, and chaſtiſed the raſh youth by a ſhort confinement. The offence was ſoon forgot, but the punishment was remem-

She revenges her husband's death.

CHAP. XI. A. D. 250.

bered; and Mæonius, with a few daring aſſociates, aſſaſſinated his uncle in the midſt of a great entertainment. Herod, the ſon of Odenathus, though not of Zenobia, a young man of a ſoft and effeminate temper [57], was killed with his father. But Mæonius obtained only the pleaſure of revenge by this bloody deed. He had ſcarcely time to aſſume the title of Auguſtus, before he was ſacrificed by Zenobia to the memory of her husband [58].

and reigns over the Eaſt and Egypt.

With the aſſiſtance of his moſt faithful friends, she immediately filled the vacant throne, and governed with manly counſels Palmyra, Syria, and the Eaſt, above five years. By the death of Odenathus, that authority was at an end which the ſenate had granted him only as a perſonal diſtinction; but his martial widow, diſdaining both the ſenate and Gallienus, obliged one of the Roman generals, who was ſent againſt her, to retreat into Europe, with the loſs of his army and his reputation [59]. Inſtead of the little paſſions which ſo frequently perplex a female reign, the ſteady adminiſtration of Zenobia was guided by the moſt judicious maxims of policy. If it was expedient to pardon, she could calm her reſentment: if it was neceſſary to punish, she could impoſe ſilence on the voice of pity. Her ſtrict œconomy was accuſed of avarice; yet on every proper occaſion she appeared magnificent and liberal. The neighbouring ſtates of Arabia, Armenia, and Perſia, dreaded her enmity, and ſolicited her alliance. To the dominions of Odenathus, which extended from the Euphrates to the frontiers of Bithynia, his

widow added the inheritance of her anceſtors, the populous and fertile kingdom of Egypt. The emperor Claudius acknowledged her merit, and was content, that, while *he* purſued the Gothic war, *ſhe* ſhould aſſert the dignity of the empire in the Eaſt [60]. The conduct, however, of Zenobia, was attended with ſome ambiguity; nor is it unlikely that ſhe had conceived the deſign of erecting an independent and hoſtile monarchy. She blended with the popular manners of Roman princes the ſtately pomp of the courts of Aſia, and exacted from her ſubjects the ſame adoration that was paid to the ſucceſſors of Cyrus. She beſtowed on her three ſons [61] a Latin education, and often ſhewed them to the troops adorned with the Imperial purple. For herſelf ſhe reſerved the diadem, with the ſplendid but doubtful title of Queen of the Eaſt. CHAP. XI.

When Aurelian paſſed over into Aſia, againſt an adverſary whoſe ſex alone could render her an object of contempt, his preſence reſtored obedience to the province of Bithynia, already ſhaken by the arms and intrigues of Zenobia [62]. Advancing at the head of his legions, he accepted the ſubmiſſion of Ancyra, and was admitted into Tyana after an obſtinate ſiege, by the help of a perfidious citizen. The generous though fierce temper of Aurelian abandoned the traitor to the rage of the ſoldiers: a ſuperſtitious reverence induced him to treat with lenity the countrymen of Apollonius the philoſopher [63]. Antioch was deſerted on his approach, till the emperor, by his ſalutary edicts, recalled the

The expedition of Aurelian. A. D. 272.

CHAP. XI.

fugitives, and granted a general pardon to all who, from neceſſity rather than choice, had been engaged in the ſervice of the Palmyrenian queen. The unexpected mildneſs of ſuch a conduct reconciled the minds of the Syrians, and, as far as the gates of Emeſa, the wishes of the people ſeconded the terror of his arms [“].

The emperor defeats the Palmyrenians in the battles of Antioch and Emeſa.

Zenobia would have ill deſerved her reputation, had ſhe indolently permitted the emperor of the Weſt to approach within an hundred miles of her capital. The fate of the Eaſt was decided in two great battles; ſo ſimilar in almoſt every circumſtance, that we can ſcarcely diſtinguish them from each other, except by obſerving that the firſt was fought near Antioch [“], and the ſecond near Emeſa [“]. In both, the queen of Palmyra animated the armies by her preſence, and devolved the execution of her orders on Zabdas, who had already ſignalized his military talents by the conqueſt of Egypt. The numerous forces of Zenobia conſiſted for the moſt part of light archers, and of heavy cavalry clothed in complete ſteel. The Moorish and Illyrian horſe of Aurelian were unable to ſuſtain the ponderous charge of their antagoniſts. They fled in real or affected diſorder, engaged the Palmyrenians in a laborious purſuit, haraſſed them by a deſultory combat, and at length diſcomfited this impenetrable but unwieldy body of cavalry. The light infantry, in the mean time, when they had exhauſted their quivers, remaining without protection againſt a cloſer onſet, expoſed their naked ſides to the ſwords of the legions. Aurelian had choſen

chosen these veteran troops, who were usually stationed on the Upper Danube, and whose valour had been severely tried in the Alemannic war [67]. After the defeat of Emesa, Zenobia found it impossible to collect a third army. As far as the frontier of Egypt, the nations subject to her empire had joined the standard of the conqueror, who detached Probus, the bravest of his generals, to possess himself of the Egyptian provinces. Palmyra was the last resource of the widow of Odenathus. She retired within the walls of her capital, made every preparation for a vigorous resistance, and declared with the intrepidity of a heroine, that the last moment of her reign and of her life should be the same. CHAP. XI.

The state of Palmyra.

Amid the barren deserts of Arabia, a few cultivated spots rise like islands out of the sandy ocean. Even the name of Tadmor, or Palmyra, by its signification in the Syriac as well as in the Latin language, denoted the multitude of palm trees which afforded shade and verdure to that temperate region. The air was pure, and the soil, watered by some invaluable springs, was capable of producing fruits as well as corn. A place possessed of such singular advantages, and situated at a convenient distance [68] between the gulph of Persia and the Mediterranean, was soon frequented by the caravans which conveyed to the nations of Europe a considerable part of the rich commodities of India. Palmyra insensibly increased into an opulent and independent city, and connecting the Roman and the Parthian monarchies by the mutual

CHAP. XI.

benefits of commerce, was ſuffered to obſerve an humble neutrality, till at length, after the victories of Trajan, the little republic ſunk into the boſom of Rome, and flouriſhed more than one hundred and fifty years in the ſubordinate though honourable rank of a colony. It was during that peaceful period, if we may judge from a few remaining inſcriptions, that the wealthy Palmyrenians conſtructed thoſe temples, palaces, and porticos of Grecian architecture, whoſe ruins, ſcattered over an extent of ſeveral miles, have deſerved the curioſity of our travellers. The elevation of Odenathus and Zenobia appeared to reflect new ſplendour on their country, and Palmyra, for a while, ſtood forth the rival of Rome: but the competition was fatal, and ages of proſperity were ſacrificed to a moment of glory [61].

It is beſieged by Aurelian,

In his march over the ſandy deſert between Emeſa and Palmyra, the emperor Aurelian was perpetually haraſſed by the Arabs; nor could he always defend his army, and eſpecially his baggage, from thoſe flying troops, of active and daring robbers, who watched the moment of ſurpriſe, and eluded the ſlow purſuit of the legions. The ſiege of Palmyra was an object far more difficult and important, and the emperor, who, with inceſſant vigour, preſſed the attacks in perſon, was himſelf wounded with a dart. "The Roman „ people," ſays Aurelian, in a original letter, "ſpeak with contempt of the war which I am „ waging againſt a woman. They are ignorant „ both of the character and of the power of Ze-

CHAP. XI.

„ nobia. It is impoſſible to enumerate her warlike „ preparations, of ſtones, of arrows, and of every „ ſpecies of miſſile weapons. Every part of the „ walls is provided with two or three *baliſtæ*, and „ artificial fires are thrown from her military „ engines. The fear of puniſhment has armed her „ with a deſperate courage. Yet ſtill I truſt in the „ protecting deities of Rome, who have hitherto „ been favourable to all my undertakings [70]." Doubtful, however, of the protection of the gods, and of the event of the ſiege, Aurelian judged it more prudent to offer terms of an advantageous capitulation; to the queen, a ſplendid retreat; to the citizens, their ancient privileges. His propoſals were obſtinately rejected, and the refuſal was accompanied with inſult.

Who becomes maſter of Zenobia and of the city.

The firmneſs of Zenobia was ſupported by the hope, that in a very ſhort time famine would compel the Roman army to repaſs the deſert; and by the reaſonable expectation that the kings of the Eaſt, and particularly the Perſian monarch, would arm in the defence of their moſt natural ally. But fortune and the perſeverance of Aurelian overcame every obſtacle. The death of Sapor, which happened about this time [71], diſtracted the councils of Perſia, and the inconſiderable ſuccours that attempted to relieve Palmyra, were eaſily intercepted either by the arms or the liberality of the emperor. From every part of Syria, a regular ſucceſſion of convoys ſafely arrived in the camp, which was increaſed by the return of Probus with his victorious troops from the conqueſt of Egypt.

CHAP. XI.

It was then that Zenobia reſolved to fly. She mounted the fleeteſt of her dromedaries [72], and had already reached the banks of the Euphrates, about ſixty miles from Palmyra, when she was overtaken by the purſuit of Aurelian's light horſe, ſeized, and brought back a captive to the feet of the emperor. Her capital ſoon afterwards ſurrendered, and was treated with unexpected lenity. The arms, horſes, and camels, with an immenſe treaſure of gold, ſilver, ſilk, and precious ſtones, were all delivered to the conqueror, who leaving only a garriſon of ſix hundred archers, returned to Emeſa, and employed ſome time in the diſtribution of rewards and punishments at the end of ſo memorable a war, which reſtored to the obedience of Rome thoſe provinces that had renounced their allegiance ſince the captivity of Valerian.

A. D. 273.

Behaviour of Zenobia.

When the Syrian queen was brought into the preſence of Aurelian, he ſternly asked her, How she had preſumed to riſe in arms againſt the emperors of Rome! The anſwer of Zenobia was a prudent mixture of reſpect and firmneſs. "Becauſe „ I diſdained to conſider as Roman emperors an „ Aureolus or a Gallienus. You alone I acknow- „ ledge as my conqueror and my ſovereign [73]." But as female fortitude is commonly artificial, ſo it is ſeldom ſteady or conſiſtent. The courage of Zenobia deſerted her in the hour of trial; she trembled at the angry clamours of the ſoldiers, who called aloud for her immediate execution, forgot the generous deſpair of Cleopatra, which she had propoſed as her model, and ignominiously

purchaſed life by the ſacrifice of her fame and her friends. It was to their counſels which governed the weakneſs of her ſex, that she imputed the guilt of her obſtinate reſiſtance; it was on their heads that she directed the vengeance of the cruel Aurelian. The fame of Longinus, who was included among the numerous and perhaps innocent victims of her fear, will ſurvive that of the queen who betrayed, or the tyrant who condemned him. Genius and learning were incapable of moving a fierce unlettered ſoldier, but they had ſerved to elevate and harmoniſe the ſoul of Longinus. Without uttering a complaint, he calmly followed the executioner, pitying his unhappy miſtreſs, and beſtowing comfort on his afflicted friends [74]. CHAP. XI.

Rebellion and ruin of Palmyra.

Returning from the conqueſt of the Eaſt, Aurelian had already croſſed the Streights which divide Europe from Aſia, when he was provoked by the intelligence that the Palmyrenians had maſſacred the governor and garriſon which he had left among them, and again erected the ſtandard of revolt. Without a moment's deliberation, he once more turned his face towards Syria. Antioch was alarmed by his rapid approach, and the helpleſs city of Palmyra felt the irreſiſtible weight of his reſentment. We have a letter of Aurelian himſelf, in which he acknowledges [75], that old men, women, children, and peaſants, had been involved in that dreadful execution, which ſhould have been confined to armed rebellion; and although his principal concern ſeems directed to the re-eſtabliſhment of a temple of the Sun, he diſ-

CHAP. XI.

covers ſome pity for the remnant of the Palmyrenians, to whom he grants the permiſſion of rebuilding and inhabiting their city. But it is eaſier to deſtroy than to reſtore. The ſeat of commerce, of arts, and of Zenobia, gradually ſunk into an obſcure town, a trifling fortreſs, and at length a miſerable village. The preſent citizens of Palmyra, conſiſting of thirty or forty families, have erected their mud cottages within the ſpacious court of a magnificent temple.

Aurelian ſuppreſſes the rebellion of Firmus in Egypt.

Another and a laſt labour ſtill awaited the indefatigable Aurelian; to ſuppreſs a dangerous though obſcure rebel, who, during the revolt of Palmyra, had ariſen on the banks of the Nile. Firmus, the friend and ally, as he proudly ſtyled himſelf, of Odenathus and Zenobia, was no more than a wealthy merchant of Egypt. In the courſe of his trade to India, he had formed very intimate connexions with the Saracens and the Blemmyes, whoſe ſituation on either coaſt of the Red Sea gave them an eaſy introduction into the Upper Egypt. The Egyptians he inflamed with the hope of freedom, and, at the head of their furious multitude, broke into the city of Alexandria, where he aſſumed the Imperial purple, coined money, published edicts, and raiſed an army, which, as he vainly boaſted, he was capable of maintaining from the ſole profits of his paper trade. Such troops were a feeble defence againſt the approach of Aurelian; and it ſeems almoſt unneceſſary to relate, that Firmus was routed, taken, tortured, and put to death. Aurelian might now congra-

CHAP. XI.

tulate the ſenate, the people, and himſelf, that in little more than three years, he had reſtored univerſal peace and order to the Roman world [76].

A. D. 274. Triumph of Aurelian.

Since the foundation of Rome, no general had more nobly deſerved a triumph than Aurelian; nor was a triumph ever celebrated with ſuperior pride and magnificence [77]. The pomp was opened by twenty elephants, four royal tigers, and above two hundred of the moſt curious animals from every climate of the North, the Eaſt, and the South. They were followed by ſixteen hundred gladiators, devoted to the cruel amuſement of the amphitheatre. The wealth of Aſia, the arms and enſigns of ſo many conquered nations, and the magnificent plate and wardrobe of the Syrian queen, were diſpoſed in exact ſymmetry or artful diſorder. The ambaſſadors of the moſt remote parts of the earth, of Æthiopia, Arabia, Perſia, Bactriana, India, and China, all remarkable by their rich or ſingular dreſſes, diſplayed the fame and power of the Roman emperor, who expoſed likewiſe to the public view the preſents that he had received, and particularly a great number of crowns of gold, the offerings of grateful cities. The victories of Aurelian were atteſted by the long train of captives who reluctantly attended his triumph, Goths, Vandals, Sarmatians, Alemanni, Franks, Gauls, Syrians, and Egyptians. Each people was diſtinguiſhed by its peculiar inſcription, and the title of Amazons was beſtowed on ten martial heroines of the Gothic nation who had been taken in arms [78]. But every eye, diſregarding the crowd

CHAP. XI.

of captives, was fixed on the emperor Tetricus, and the queen of the East. The former, as well as his son, whom he had created Augustus, was dressed in Gallic trowsers [77], a saffron tunic, and a robe of purple. The beauteous figure of Zenobia was confined by fetters of gold; a slave supported the gold chain which encircled her neck, and she almost fainted under the intolerable weight of jewels. She preceded on foot the magnificent chariot, in which she once hoped to enter the gates of Rome. It was followed by two other chariots, still more sumptuous, of Odenathus and of the Persian monarch. The triumphal car of Aurelian (it had formerly been used by a Gothic king) was drawn, on this memorable occasion, either by four stags or by four elephants [78]. The most illustrious of the senate, the people, and the army, closed the solemn procession. Unfeigned joy, wonder, and gratitude, swelled the acclamations of the multitude; but the satisfaction of the senate was clouded by the appearance of Tetricus; nor could they suppress a rising murmur, that the haughty emperor should thus expose to public ignominy the person of a Roman and a magistrate [79].

His treatment of Tetricus and Zenobia.

But however, in the treatment of his unfortunate rivals, Aurelian might indulge his pride, he behaved towards them with a generous clemency; which was seldom exercised by the ancient conquerors. Princes who, without success, had defended their throne or freedom, were frequently strangled in prison, as soon as the triumphal pomp ascended the Capitol. These usurpers, whom their

defeat had convicted of the crime of treaſon, were permitted to ſpend their lives in affluence and honourable repoſe. The emperor preſented Zenobia with an elegant villa at Tibur, or Tivoli, about twenty miles from the capital; the Syrian queen inſenſibly ſunk into a Roman matron, her daughters married into noble families, and her race was not yet extinct in the fifth century [83]. Tetricus and his ſon were re-inſtated in their rank and fortunes. They erected on the Cælian hill a magnificent palace, and as ſoon as it was finiſhed, invited Aurelian to ſupper. On his entrance, he was agreeably ſurpriſed with a picture which repreſented their ſingular hiſtory. They were delineated offering to the emperor a civic crown and the ſceptre of Gaul, and again receiving at his hands the ornaments of the ſenatorial dignity. The father was afterwards inveſted with the government of Lucania [83], and Aurelian, who ſoon admitted the abdicated monarch to his friendſhip and converſation, familiarly asked him, Whether it were not more deſirable to adminiſter a province of Italy, than to reign beyond the Alps? The ſon long continued a reſpectable member of the ſenate; nor was there any one of the Roman nobility more eſteemed by Aurelian, as well as by his ſucceſſors [84].

CHAP. XI.

His magnificence and devotion.

So long and ſo various was the pomp of Aurelian's triumph, that although it opened with the dawn of day, the ſlow majeſty of the proceſſion aſcended not the Capitol before the ninth hour; and it was already dark when the emperor

CHAP. XI.

returned to the palace. The feſtival was protracted by theatrical repreſentations, the games of the circus, the hunting of wild beaſts, combats of gladiators, and naval engagements. Liberal donatives were diſtributed to the army and people, and ſeveral inſtitutions, agreeable or beneficial to the city, contributed to perpetuate the glory of Aurelian. A conſiderable portion of his oriental ſpoils was conſecrated to the gods of Rome; the Capitol, and every other temple, glittered with the offerings of his oſtentatious piety; and the temple of the Sun alone received above fifteen thouſand pounds of gold [55]. This laſt was a magnificent ſtructure, erected by the emperor on the ſide of the Quirinal hill, and dedicated, ſoon after the triumph, to that deity whom Aurelian adored as the parent of his life and fortunes. His mother had been an inferior prieſteſs in a chapel of the Sun; a peculiar devotion to the god of Light, was a ſentiment which the fortunate peaſant imbibed in his infancy; and every ſtep of his elevation, every victory of his reign, fortified ſuperſtition by gratitude [56].

He ſuppreſſes a ſedition at Rome.

The arms of Aurelian had vanquiſhed the foreign and domeſtic foes of the Republic. We are aſſured, that, by his ſalutary rigour, crimes and factions, miſchievous arts and pernicious connivance, the luxuriant growth of a feeble and oppreſſive government, were eradicated throughout the Roman world [57]. But if we attentively reflect how much ſwifter is the progreſs of corruption than its cure, and if we remember that

the years abandoned to public diſorders exceeded the months allotted to the martial reign of Aurelian, we muſt confeſs that a few ſhort intervals of peace were inſufficient for the arduous work of reformation. Even his attempt to reſtore the integrity of the coin, was oppoſed by a formidable inſurrection. The emperor's vexation breaks out in one of his private letters. "Surely," ſays he, "the gods have decreed that my life ſhould „ be a perpetual warfare. A ſedition within the „ walls has juſt now given birth to a very ſerious „ civil war. The workmen of the mint, at the „ inſtigation of Feliciſſimus, a ſlave to whom I „ had intruſted an employment in the finances, „ have riſen in rebellion. They are at length ſup„ preſſed; but ſeven thouſand of my ſoldiers have „ been ſlain in the conteſt, of thoſe troops whoſe „ ordinary ſtation is in Dacia, and the camps along „ the Danube [a]." Other writers who confirm the ſame fact, add likewiſe, that it happened ſoon after Aurelian's triumph; that the deciſive engagement was fought on the Cælian hill; that the workmen of the mint had adulterated the coin; and that the emperor reſtored the public credit, by delivering out good money in exchange for the bad, which the people was commanded to bring into the treaſury [b].

CHAP. XI.

We might content ourſelves with relating this extraordinary tranſaction, but we cannot diſſemble how much in its preſent form it appears to us inconſiſtent and incredible. The debaſement of the coin is indeed well ſuited to the admini-

Obſervations upon it.

CHAP. XI.

ſtration of Gallienus; nor is it unlikely that the inſtruments of the corruption might dread the inflexible juſtice of Aurelian. But the guilt, as well as the profit, muſt have been confined to a few; nor is it eaſy to conceive by what arts they could arm a people whom they had injured, againſt a monarch whom they had betrayed. We might naturally expect, that ſuch miſcreants ſhould have ſhared the public deteſtation, with the informers and the other miniſters of oppreſſion; and that the reformation of the coin ſhould have been an action equally popular with the deſtruction of thoſe obſolete accounts, which by the emperor's orders were burnt in the forum of Trajan [*]. In an age when the principles of commerce were ſo imperfectly underſtood, the moſt deſirable end might perhaps be effected by harſh and injudicious means; but a temporary grievance of ſuch a nature can ſcarcely excite and ſupport a ſerious civil war. The repetition of intolerable taxes, impoſed either on the land or on the neceſſaries of life, may at laſt provoke thoſe who will not, or who cannot, relinquish their country. But the caſe is far otherwiſe in every operation which, by whatſoever expedients, reſtores the juſt value of money. The tranſient evil is ſoon obliterated by the permanent benefit, the loſs is divided among multitudes; and if a few wealthy individuals experience a ſenſible diminution of treaſure, with their riches, they at the ſame time loſe the degree of weight and importance which they derived from the poſſeſſion of them. However Aurelian might chuſe to diſguiſe

the real cauſe of the inſurrection, his reformation of the coin could only furniſh a faint pretence to a party already powerful and diſcontented. Rome, though deprived of freedom, was diſtracted by faction. The people, towards whom the emperor himſelf a plebejan, always expreſſed a peculiar fondneſs, lived in perpetual diſſenſion with the ſenate, the equeſtrian order, and the Prætorian guards [11]. Nothing leſs than the firm though ſecret conſpiracy of thoſe orders, of the authority of the firſt, the wealth of the ſecond, and the arms of the third, could have diſplayed a ſtrength capable of contending in battle with the veteran legions of the Danube, which, under the conduct of a martial ſovereign, had atchieved the conqueſt of the Weſt and of the Eaſt.

Cruelty of Aurelian.

Whatever was the cauſe or the object of this rebellion, imputed with ſo little probability to the workmen of the mint, Aurelian uſed his victory with unrelenting rigour [12]. He was naturally of a ſevere diſpoſition. A peaſant and a ſoldier, his nerves yielded not eaſily to the impreſſions of ſympathy, and he could ſuſtain without emotion the ſight of tortures and death. Trained from his earlieſt youth in the exerciſe of arms, he ſet too ſmall a value on the life of a citizen, chaſtiſed by military execution the ſlighteſt offences, and transferred the ſtern diſcipline of the camp into the civil adminiſtration of the laws. His love of juſtice often became a blind and furious paſſion; and whenever he deemed his own or the public ſafety endangered, he diſregarded the rules of evidence,

CHAP. XI.

and the proportion of punishments. The unprovoked rebellion with which the Romans rewarded his ſervices, exaſperated his haughty ſpirit. The nobleſt families of the capital were involved in the guilt or ſuſpicion of this dark conſpiracy. A haſty ſpirit of revenge urged the bloody proſecution, and it proved fatal to one of the nephews of the emperor. The executioners (if we may uſe the expreſſion of a contemporary poet) were fatigued, the priſons were crowded, and the unhappy ſenate lamented the death or abſence of its moſt illuſtrious members [13]. Nor was the pride of Aurelian leſs offenſive to that aſſembly than his cruelty. Ignorant or impatient of the reſtraints of civil inſtitutions, he diſdained to hold his power by any other title than that of the ſword, and governed by right of conqueſt an empire which he had ſaved and ſubdued [14].

He marches into the Eaſt, and is aſſaſſinated.

It was obſerved by one of the moſt ſagacious of the Roman princes, that the talents of his predeceſſor Aurelian, were better ſuited to the command of an army, than to the government of an empire [15]. Conſcious of the character in which Nature and experience had enabled him to excel, he again took the field a few months after his triumph. It was expedient to exerciſe the reſtleſs temper of the legions in ſome foreign war, and the Perſian monarch, exulting in the shame of Valerian, ſtill braved with impunity the offended majeſty of Rome. At the head of an army, leſs formidable by its numbers than by its diſcipline and valour, the emperor advanced as far as the

A. D. 274. October.

Streights which divide Europe from Aſia. He there experienced, that the moſt abſolute power is a weak defence againſt the effects of deſpair. He had threatened one of his ſecretaries who was accuſed of extortion; and it was known that he ſeldom threatened in vain. The laſt hope which remained for the criminal, was to involve ſome of the principal officers of the army in his danger, or at leaſt in his fears. Artfully counterfeiting his maſter's hand, he ſhewed them, in a long and bloody liſt, their own names devoted to death. Without ſuſpecting or examining the fraud, they reſolved to ſecure their lives by the murder of the emperor. On his march, between Byzantium and Heraclea, Aurelian was ſuddenly attacked by the conſpirators, whoſe ſtations gave them a right to ſurround his perſon, and, after a short reſiſtance, fell by the hand of Mucapor, a general whom he had always loved and truſted. He died regretted by the army, deteſted by the ſenate, but univerſally acknowledged as a warlike and fortunate prince, the uſeful though ſevere reformer of a degenerate ſtate [n].

CHAP. XI.

A. D. 275. January.

CHAP. XII.

Conduct of the Army and Senate after the Death of Aurelian. — Reigns of Tacitus, Probus, Carus, and his Sons.

CHAP. XII. Extraordinary conteſt between the army and the ſenate for the choice of an emperor.

SUCH was the unhappy condition of the Roman emperors, that, whatever might be their conduct, their fate was commonly the ſame. A life of pleaſure or virtue, of ſeverity or mildneſs, of indolence or glory, alike led to an untimely grave; and almoſt every reign is cloſed by the ſame diſguſting repetition of treaſon and murder. The death of Aurelian, however, is remarkable by its extraordinary conſequences. The legions admired, lamented, and revenged, their victorious chief. The artifice of his perfidious ſecretary was diſcovered and punished. The deluded conſpirators attended the funeral of their injured ſovereign, with ſincere or well-feigned contrition, and ſubmitted to the unanimous reſolution of the military order, which was ſignified by the following epiſtle. „ The brave and fortunate armies to the ſenate „ and people of Rome. The crime of one man, „ and the error of many, have deprived us of the „ late emperor Aurelian. May it pleaſe you, „ venerable lords and fathers! to place him in „ the number of the gods, and to appoint a „ ſucceſſor whom your judgment ſhall declare „ worthy of the Imperial purple! None of thoſe, „ whoſe guilt or misfortune have contributed to

our

„ our loſs, ſhall ever reign over us [1]. " The Roman ſenators heard, without ſurpriſe, that another emperor had been aſſaſſinated in his camp: they ſecretly rejoiced in the fall of Aurelian; but the modeſt and dutiful addreſs of the legions, when it was communicated in full aſſembly by the conſul, diffuſed the moſt pleaſing aſtoniſhment. Such honours as fear and perhaps eſteem could extort, they liberally poured forth on the memory of their deceaſed ſovereign. Such acknowledgments as gratitude could inſpire, they returned to the faithful armies of the republic, who entertained ſo juſt a ſenſe of the legal authority of the ſenate in the choice of an emperor. Yet, notwithſtanding this flattering appeal, the moſt prudent of the aſſembly declined expoſing their ſafety and dignity to the caprice of an armed multitude. The ſtrength of the legions was, indeed, a pledge of their ſincerity, ſince thoſe who may command are ſeldom reduced to the neceſſity of diſſembling; but could it naturally be expected, that a haſty repentance would correct the inveterate habits of fourſcore years? Should the ſoldiers relapſe into their accuſtomed ſeditions, their inſolence might diſgrace the majeſty of the ſenate, and prove fatal to the object of its choice. Motives like theſe dictated a decree, by which the election of a new emperor was referred to the ſuffrage of the military order.

CHAP. XII.

The contention that enſued is one of the beſt atteſted, but moſt improbable events in the hiſtory of mankind [2]. The troops, as if ſatiated with the exerciſe of power, again conjured the ſenate to

A. D. 275. Feb. 3. A peaceful interregnum of eight months.

CHAP. XII.

inveſt one of its own body with the Imperial purple. The ſenate ſtill perſiſted in its refuſal; the army in its requeſt. The reciprocal offer was preſſed and rejected at leaſt three times, and whilſt the obſtinate modeſty of either party was reſolved to receive a maſter from the hands of the other, eight months inſenſibly elapſed: an amazing period of tranquil anarchy, during which the Roman world remained without a ſovereign, without an uſurper, and without a ſedition. The generals and magiſtrates appointed by Aurelian continued to execute their ordinary functions; and it is obſerved, that a proconſul of Aſia was the only conſiderable perſon removed from his office, in the whole courſe of the interregnum.

An event ſomewhat ſimilar, but much leſs authentic, is ſuppoſed to have happened after the death of Romulus, who, in his life and character, bore ſome affinity with Aurelian. The throne was vacant during twelve months, till the election of a Sabine philoſopher, and the public peace was guarded in the ſame manner, by the union of the ſeveral orders of the ſtate. But, in the time of Numa and Romulus, the arms of the people were controlled by the authority of the Patricians; and the balance of freedom was eaſily preſerved in a ſmall and virtuous community [1]. The decline of the Roman ſtate, far different from its infancy, was attended with every circumſtance that could baniſh from an interregnum the proſpect of obedience and harmony: an immenſe and tumultuous capital, a wide extent of empire, the ſervile equality of

deſpotiſm, an army of four hundred thouſand mercenaries, and the experience of frequent revolutions. Yet, notwithſtanding all theſe temptations, the diſcipline and memory of Aurelian ſtill reſtrained the ſeditious temper of the troops, as well as the fatal ambition of their leaders. The flower of the legions maintained their ſtations on the banks of the Boſphorus, and the Imperial ſtandard awed the leſs powerful camps of Rome and of the provinces. A generous though tranſient enthuſiaſm ſeemed to animate the military order; and we may hope that a few real patriots cultivated the returning friendſhip of the army and the ſenate, as the only expedient capable of reſtoring the republic to its ancient beauty and vigour.

A. D. 275. Sept. 25. The conſul aſſembles the ſenate.

On the twenty-fifth of September, near eight months after the murder of Aurelian, the conſul convoked an aſſembly of the ſenate, and reported the doubtful and dangerous ſituation of the empire. He ſlightly inſinuated, that the precarious loyalty of the ſoldiers depended on the chance of every hour, and of every accident; but he repreſented, with the moſt convincing eloquence, the various dangers that might attend any farther delay in the choice of an emperor. Intelligence, he ſaid, was already received, that the Germans had paſſed the Rhine, and occupied ſome of the ſtrongeſt and moſt opulent cities of Gaul. The ambition of the Perſian king kept the Eaſt in perpetual alarms; Egypt, Africa, and Illyricum, were expoſed to foreign and domeſtic arms, and the levity of Syria would prefer even a female ſceptre to the ſanctity

CHAP. XII.

of the Roman laws. The conſul then addreſſing himſelf to Tacitus, the firſt of the ſenators [4], required his opinion on the important ſubject of a proper candidate for the vacant throne.

Character of Tacitus.

If we can prefer perſonal merit to accidental greatneſs, we ſhall eſteem the birth of Tacitus more truly noble than that of kings. He claimed his deſcent from the philoſophic hiſtorian, whoſe writings will inſtruct the laſt generations of mankind [5]. The ſenator Tacitus was then ſeventy-five years of age [6]. The long period of his innocent life was adorned with wealth and honours. He had twice been inveſted with the conſular dignity [7], and enjoyed with elegance and ſobriety his ample patrimony of between two and three millions ſterling [8]. The experience of ſo many princes, whom he had eſteemed or endured, from the vain follies of Elagabalus to the uſeful rigour of Aurelian, taught him to form a juſt eſtimate of the duties, the dangers, and the temptations, of their ſublime ſtation. From the aſſiduous ſtudy of his immortal anceſtor he derived the knowledge of the Roman conſtitution, and of human nature [9]. The voice of the people had already named Tacitus as the citizen the moſt worthy of empire. The ungrateful rumour reached his ears, and induced him to ſeek the retirement of one of his villas in Campania. He had paſſed two months in the delightful privacy of Baiæ, when he reluctantly obeyed the ſummons of the conſul to reſume his honourable place in the ſenate, and to aſſiſt the republic with his counſels on this important occaſion.

He aroſe to ſpeak, when, from every quarter of the houſe, he was ſaluted with the names of Auguſtus and Emperor. „Tacitus Auguſtus, the „gods preſerve thee, we chuſe thee for our ſovereign, „to thy care we intruſt the republic and the world. „Accept the empire from the authority of the „ſenate. It is due to thy rank, to thy conduct, „to thy manners." As ſoon as the tumult of acclamations ſubſided, Tacitus attempted to decline the dangerous honour, and to expreſs his wonder, that they ſhould elect his age and infirmities to ſucceed the martial vigour of Aurelian. „Are „theſe limbs, conſcript fathers! fitted to ſuſtain „the weight of armour, or to practiſe the exerciſes „of the camp? The variety of climates, and the „hardships of a military life, would ſoon oppreſs „a feeble conſtitution, which ſubſiſts only by „the moſt tender management. My exhauſted „ſtrength ſcarcely enables me to diſcharge the „duty of a ſenator; how inſufficient would it „prove to the arduous labours of war and govern„ment? Can you hope, that the legions will „reſpect a weak old man, whoſe days have been „ſpent in the ſhade of peace and retirement? Can „you deſire that I ſhould ever find reaſon to regret „the favourable opinion of the ſenate [10]?"

CHAP. XII. He is elected emperor,

The reluctance of Tacitus, and it might poſſibly be ſincere, was encountered by the affectionate obſtinacy of the ſenate. Five hundred voices repeated at once, in eloquent confuſion, that the greateſt of the Roman princes, Numa, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, had aſcended the throne in a

and accepts the purple.

CHAP. XII.

very advanced ſeaſon of life; that the mind, not the body, a ſovereign, not a ſoldier, was the object of their choice; and that they expected from him no more than to guide by his wiſdom the valour of the legions. Theſe preſſing though tumultuary inſtances were ſeconded by a more regular oration of Metius Falconius, the next on the conſular bench to Tacitus himſelf. He reminded the aſſembly of the evils which Rome had endured from the vices of headſtrong and capricious youths, congratulated them on the election of a virtuous and experienced ſenator, and, with a manly, though perhaps a ſelfiſh, freedom, exhorted Tacitus to remember the reaſons of his elevation, and to ſeek a ſucceſſor, not in his own family, but in the republic. The ſpeech of Falconius was enforced by a general acclamation. The emperor elect ſubmitted to the authority of his country, and received the voluntary homage of his equals. The judgment of the ſenate was confirmed by the conſent of the Roman people, and of the Prætorian guards [11].

Authority of the ſenate.

The adminiſtration of Tacitus was not unworthy of his life and principles. A grateful ſervant of the ſenate, he conſidered that national council as the author, and himſelf as the ſubject, of the laws [12]. He ſtudied to heal the wounds which Imperial pride, civil diſcord, and military violence, had inflicted on the conſtitution, and to reſtore, at leaſt, the image of the ancient republic, as it had been preſerved by the policy of Auguſtus, and the virtues of Trajan and the Antonines. It may

not be uſeleſs to recapitulate ſome of the moſt important prerogatives which the ſenate appeared to have regained by the election of Tacitus [13]. 1. To inveſt one of their body, under the title of emperor, with the general command of the armies and the government of the frontier provinces. 2. To determine the liſt, or as it was then ſtyled, the College of Conſuls. They were twelve in number, who, in ſucceſſive pairs, each, during the ſpace of two months, filled the year, and repreſented the dignity of that ancient office. The authority of the ſenate, in the nomination of the conſuls, was exerciſed with ſuch independent freedom, that no regard was paid to an irregular requeſt of the emperor in favour of his brother Florianus. „ The ſenate, " exclaimed Tacitus, with the honeſt tranſport of a patriot, „ underſtand „ the character of a prince whom they have choſen. " 3. To appoint the proconſuls and preſidents of the provinces, and to confer on all the magiſtrates their civil juriſdiction. 4. To receive appeals through the intermediate office of the præfect of the city from all the tribunals of the empire. 5. To give force and validity, by their decrees, to ſuch as they ſhould approve of the emperor's edicts. 6. To theſe ſeveral branches of authority, we may add ſome inſpection over the finances, ſince, even in the ſtern reign of Aurelian, it was in their power to divert a part of the revenue from the public ſervice [14].

CHAP. XII.

Circular epiſtles were ſent, without delay, to all the principal cities of the empire, Treves, Milan, Aquileia, Theſſalonica, Corinth, Athens,

Their joy and confidence.

CHAP. XII.

Antioch, Alexandria, and Carthage, to claim their obedience, and to inform them of the happy revolution, which had reſtored the Roman ſenate to its ancient dignity. Two of theſe epiſtles are ſtill extant. We likewiſe poſſeſs two very ſingular fragments of the private correſpondence of the ſenators on this occaſion. They diſcover the moſt exceſſive joy, and the moſt unbounded hopes. „ Caſt away your indolence," it is thus that one of the ſenators addreſſes his friend, „ emerge from „ your retirements of Baiæ and Puteoli. Give your„ ſelf to the city, to the ſenate. Rome flouriſhes, „ the whole republic flouriſhes. Thanks to the „ Roman army, to an army truly Roman; at „ length, we have recovered our juſt authority, „ the end of all our deſires. We hear appeals, „ we appoint proconſuls, we create emperors; „ perhaps too we may reſtrain them — to the „ wiſe, a word is ſufficient [r]." Theſe lofty expectations were, however, ſoon diſappointed; nor, indeed, was it poſſible, that the armies and the provinces ſhould long obey the luxurious and unwarlike nobles of Rome. On the ſlighteſt touch, the unſupported fabric of their pride and power fell to the ground. The expiring ſenate diſplayed a ſudden luſtre, blazed for a moment, and was extinguiſhed for ever.

A. D. 276. Tacitus is acknowledged by the army.

All that had yet paſſed at Rome was no more than a theatrical repreſentation, unleſs it was ratified by the more ſubſtantial power of the legions. Leaving the ſenators to enjoy their dream of freedom and ambition, Tacitus proceeded to the Thracian camp,

and was there, by the Prætorian præfect, preſented to the aſſembled troops, as the prince whom they themſelves had demanded, and whom the ſenate had beſtowed. As ſoon as the præfect was ſilent, the emperor addreſſed himſelf to the ſoldiers with eloquence and propriety. He gratified their avarice by a liberal diſtribution of treaſure, under the names of pay and donative. He engaged their eſteem by a ſpirited declaration, that although his age might diſable him from the performance of military exploits, his counſels ſhould never be unworthy of a Roman general, the ſucceſſor of the brave Aurelian [16].

The Alani invade Aſia, and are repulſed by Tacitus.

Whilſt the deceaſed emperor was making preparations for a ſecond expedition into the Eaſt, he had negociated with the Alani, a Scythian people, who pitched their tents in the neighbourhood of the lake Mœotis. Thoſe barbarians, allured by preſents and ſubſidies, had promiſed to invade Perſia with a numerous body of light cavalry. They were faithful to their engagements; but when they arrived on the Roman frontier, Aurelian was already dead, the deſign of the Perſian war was at leaſt ſuſpended, and the generals, who, during their interregnum, exerciſed a doubtful authority, were unprepared either to receive or to oppoſe them. Provoked by ſuch treatment, which they conſidered as trifling and perfidious, the Alani had recourſe to their own valour for their payment and revenge; and as they moved with the uſual ſwiftneſs of Tartars, they had ſoon ſpread themſelves over the provinces of Pontus, Cappadocia, Cilicia,

CHAP. XII.

and Galatia. The legions, who from the oppoſite shores of the Boſphorus could almoſt diſtinguish the flames of the cities and villages, impatiently urged their general to lead them againſt the invaders. The conduct of Tacitus was ſuitable to his age and ſtation. He convinced the barbarians, of the faith, as well as of the power, of the empire. Great numbers of the Alani, appeaſed by the punctual diſcharge of the engagements which Aurelian had contracted with them, relinquished their booty and captives, and quietly retreated to their own deſerts, beyond the Phaſis. Againſt the remainder who refuſed peace, the Roman emperor waged, in perſon, a ſucceſsful war. Seconded by an army of brave and experienced veterans, in a few weeks he delivered the provinces of Aſia from the terror of the Scythian invaſion [17].

Death of the emperor Tacitus.

But the glory and life of Tacitus were of short duration. Tranſported, in the depth of winter, from the ſoft retirement of Campania, to the foot of mount Caucaſus, he ſunk under the unaccuſtomed hardships of a military life. The fatigues of the body were aggravated by the cares of the mind. For a while, the angry and ſelfish paſſions of the ſoldiers had been ſuſpended by the enthuſiaſm of public virtue. They ſoon broke out with redoubled violence, and raged in the camp, and even in the tent, of the aged emperor. His mild and amiable character ſerved only to inſpire contempt, and he was inceſſantly tormented with factions which he could not aſſuage, and by demands which it was impoſſible to ſatisfy. Whatever

flattering expectations he had conceived of reconciling the public diſorders, Tacitus ſoon was convinced, that the licentiouſneſs of the army diſdained the feeble reſtraint of laws, and his laſt hour was haſtened by anguiſh and diſappointment. It may be doubtful whether the ſoldiers imbrued their hands in the blood of this innocent prince [18]. It is certain, that their inſolence was the cauſe of his death. He expired at Tyana in Cappadocia, after a reign of only ſix months and about twenty days [19]. CHAP. XII. A. D. 276. April 12.

Uſurpation and death of his brother Florianus.

The eyes of Tacitus were ſcarcely cloſed, before his brother Florianus ſhewed himſelf unworthy to reign, by the haſty uſurpation of the purple, without expecting the approbation of the ſenate. The reverence for the Roman conſtitution, which yet influenced the camp and the provinces, was ſufficiently ſtrong to diſpoſe them to cenſure, but not to provoke them to oppoſe, the precipitate ambition of Florianus. The diſcontent would have evaporated in idle murmurs, had not the general of the Eaſt, the heroic Probus, boldly declared himſelf the avenger of the ſenate. The conteſt, however, was ſtill unequal; nor could the moſt able leader, at the head of the effeminate troops of Egypt and Syria, encounter, with any hopes of victory, the legions of Europe, whoſe irreſiſtible ſtrength appeared to ſupport the brother of Tacitus. But the fortune and activity of Probus triumphed over every obſtacle. The hardy veterans of his rival, accuſtomed to cold climates, ſickened and conſumed away in the ſultry heats of Cilicia,

CHAP. XII.

where the ſummer proved remarkably unwholeſome. Their numbers were diminished by frequent deſertion, the paſſes of the mountains were feebly defended; Tarſus opened its gates, and the ſoldiers of Florianus, when they had permitted him to enjoy the Imperial title about three months, delivered the empire from civil war by the eaſy ſacrifice of a prince whom they deſpiſed [20].

July.

Their family ſubſiſts in obſcurity.

The perpetual revolutions of the throne had ſo perfectly eraſed every notion of hereditary right, that the family of an unfortunate emperor was incapable of exciting the jealouſy of his ſucceſſors. The children of Tacitus and Florianus were permitted to deſcend into a private ſtation, and to mingle with the general maſs of the people. Their poverty indeed became an additional ſafeguard to their innocence. When Tacitus was elected by the ſenate, he reſigned his ample patrimony to the public ſervice [21], an act of generoſity ſpecious in appearance, but which evidently diſcloſed his intention of tranſmitting the empire to his deſcendants. The only conſolation of their fallen ſtate, was the remembrance of tranſient greatneſs, and a diſtant hope, the child of a flattering prophecy, that at the end of a thouſand years, a monarch of the race of Tacitus ſhould ariſe, the protector of the ſenate, the reſtorer of Rome, and the conqueror of the whole earth [22].

Character and elevation of the emperor Probus.

The peaſants of Illyricum, who had already given Claudius and Aurelian to the ſinking empire, had an equal right to glory in the elevation of Probus [23]. Above twenty years before, the emperor Valerian,

with his uſual penetration, had diſcovered the riſing merit of the young ſoldier, on whom he conferred the rank of tribune, long before the age preſcribed by the military regulations. The tribune ſoon juſtified his choice, by a victory over a great body of Sarmatians, in which he ſaved the life of a near relation of Valerian; and deſerved to receive from the emperor's hand the collars, bracelets, ſpears, and banners, the mural and the civic crown, and all the honourable rewards reſerved by ancient Rome for ſucceſsful valour. The third, and afterwards the tenth, legion were intruſted to the command of Probus, who, in every ſtep of his promotion, ſhewed himſelf ſuperior to the ſtation which he filled. Africa and Pontus, the Rhine, the Danube, the Euphrates, and the Nile, by turns afforded him the moſt ſplendid occaſions of diſplaying his perſonal proweſs and his conduct in war. Aurelian was indebted to him for the conqueſt of Egypt, and ſtill more indebted for the honeſt courage with which he often checked the cruelty of his maſter. Tacitus, who deſired by the abilities of his generals to ſupply his own deficiency of military talents, named him commander in chief of all the eaſtern provinces, with five times the uſual ſalary, the promiſe of the conſulſhip, and the hope of a triumph. When Probus aſcended the Imperial throne, he was about forty-four years of age [24]; in the full poſſeſſion of his fame, of the love of the army, and of a mature vigour of mind and body.

CHAP. XII.

CHAP. XII.

His refpectful conduct towards the ſenate.

His acknowledged merit, and the ſucceſs of his arms againſt Florianus, left him without an enemy or a competitor. Yet, if we may credit his own profeſſions, very far from being deſirous of the empire, he had accepted it with the moſt ſincere reluctance. „ But it is no longer in my power, " ſays Probus, in a private letter, „ to lay down „ a title ſo full of envy and of danger. I muſt „ continue to perſonate the character which the „ ſoldiers have impoſed upon me [25]. " His dutiful addreſs to the ſenate diſplayed the ſentiments, or at leaſt the language, of a Roman patriot: „ When „ you elected one of your order, conſcript fathers! „ to ſucceed the emperor Aurelian, you acted in „ a manner ſuitable to your juſtice and wiſdom. „ For you are the legal ſovereigns of the world, „ and the power which you derive from your „ anceſtors, will deſcend to your poſterity. Happy „ would it have been, if Florianus, inſtead of „ uſurping the purple of his brother, like a private „ inheritance, had expected what your majeſty „ might determine, either in his favour, or in „ that of any other perſon. The prudent ſoldiers „ have punished his raſhneſs. To me they have „ offered the title of Auguſtus. But I ſubmit to „ your clemency my pretenſions and my merits [26]."

A. D. 276. Auguſt 3.

When this reſpectful epiſtle was read by the conſul, the ſenators were unable to diſguiſe their ſatisfaction, that Probus ſhould condeſcend thus humbly to ſolicit a ſceptre which he already poſſeſſed. They celebrated with the warmeſt gratitude his virtues, his exploits, and above all his moderation. A decree immediately

CHAP. XII.

paſſed, without a diſſenting voice, to ratify the election of the eaſtern armies, and to confer on their chief all the ſeveral branches of the Imperial dignity: the names of Cæſar and Auguſtus, the title of Father of his country, the right of making in the ſame day three motions in the ſenate [27], the office of Pontifex Maximus, the tribunitian power, and the proconſular command; a mode of inveſtiture, which, though it ſeemed to multiply the authority of the emperor, expreſſed the conſtitution of the ancient republic. The reign of Probus correſponded with this fair beginning. The ſenate was permitted to direct the civil adminiſtration of the empire. Their faithful general aſſerted the honour of the Roman arms, and often laid at their feet crowns of gold and barbaric trophies, the fruits of his numerous victories [28]. Yet, whilſt he gratified their vanity, he muſt ſecretly have deſpiſed their indolence and weakneſs. Though it was every moment in their power to repeal the diſgraceful edict of Gallienus, the proud ſucceſſors of the Scipios patiently acquieſced in their excluſion from all military employments. They ſoon experienced, that thoſe who refuſe the ſword, muſt renounce the ſceptre.

Victories of Probus over the barbarians.

The ſtrength of Aurelian had crushed on every ſide the enemies of Rome. After his death they ſeemed to revive with an increaſe of fury and of numbers. They were again vanquished by the active vigour of Probus, who, in a short reign of about ſix years [29], equalled the fame of ancient heroes, and reſtored peace and order to every

CHAP. XII.

province of the Roman world. The dangerous frontier of Rhætia he ſo firmly ſecured, that he left it without the ſuſpicion of an enemy. He broke the wandering power of the Sarmatian tribes, and by the terror of his arms compelled thoſe barbarians to relinquish their ſpoil. The Gothic nation courted the alliance of ſo warlike an emperor [30]. He attacked the Iſaurians in their mountains, beſieged and took ſeveral of their ſtrongeſt caſtles [31], and flattered himſelf that he had for ever ſuppreſſed a domeſtic foe, whoſe independence ſo deeply wounded the majeſty of the empire. The troubles excited by the uſurper Firmus in the Upper Egypt, had never been perfectly appeaſed, and the cities of Ptolemais and Coptos, fortified by the alliance of the Blemmyes, ſtill maintained an obſcure rebellion. The chaſtiſement of thoſe cities, and of their auxiliaries the ſavages of the South, is ſaid to have alarmed the court of Perſia [32], and the Great King ſued in vain for the friendship of Probus. Moſt of the exploits which diſtinguished his reign, were atchieved by the perſonal valour and conduct of the emperor, inſomuch that the writer of his life expreſſes ſome amazement how, in ſo short a time, a ſingle man could be preſent in ſo many diſtant wars. The remaining actions he intruſted to the care of his lieutenants, the judicious choice of whom forms no inconſiderable part of his glory. Carus, Diocletian, Maximian, Conſtantius, Galerius, Aſclepiodatus, Annibalianus, and a crowd of other chiefs, who afterwards aſcended or ſupported the throne, were trained

trained to arms in the ſevere ſchool of Aurelian and Probus [14].

CHAP. XII.

But the moſt important ſervice which Probus rendered to the republic, was the deliverance of Gaul, and the recovery of ſeventy flouriſhing cities oppreſſed by the barbarians of Germany, who, ſince the death of Aurelian, had ravaged that great province with impunity [15]. Among the various multitude of thoſe fierce invaders, we may diſtinguish, with ſome degree of clearneſs, three great armies, or rather nations, ſucceſſively vanquiſhed by the valour of Probus. He drove back the Francs into their moraſſes; a deſcriptive circumſtance from whence we may infer, that the confederacy known by the manly appellation of *Free*, already occupied the flat maritime country, interſected and almoſt overflown by the ſtagnating waters of the Rhine, and that ſeveral tribes of the Friſians and Batavians had acceded to their alliance. He vanquiſhed the Burgundians, a conſiderable people of the Vandalic race. They had wandered in queſt of booty from the banks of the Oder to thoſe of the Seine. They eſteemed themſelves ſufficiently fortunate to purchaſe, by the reſtitution of all their booty, the permiſſion of an undiſturbed retreat. They attempted to elude that article of the treaty. Their punishment was immediate and terrible [16]. But of all the invaders of Gaul, the moſt formidable were the Lygians, a diſtant people who reigned over a wide domain on the frontiers of Poland and Sileſia [17]. In the Lygian nation, the Arii held the firſt rank by their num-

A. D. 277. He delivers Gaul from the invaſion of the Germans,

CHAP. XII.

bers and fierceneſs. "The Arii (it is thus that „ they are deſcribed by the energy of Tacitus) „ ſtudy to improve by art and circumſtances the „ innate terrors of their barbariſm. Their ſhields „ are black, their bodies are painted black. They „ chuſe for the combat the darkeſt hour of the „ night. Their hoſt advances, covered as it were „ with a funereal ſhade"; nor do they often „ find an enemy capable of ſuſtaining ſo ſtrange „ and infernal an aſpect. Of all our ſenſes, the „ eyes are the firſt vanquiſhed in battle". Yet the arms and diſcipline of the Romans eaſily diſcomfited theſe horrid phantoms. The Lygii were defeated in a general engagement, and Semno, the moſt renowned of their chiefs, fell alive into the hands of Probus. That prudent emperor, unwilling to reduce a brave people to deſpair, granted them an honourable capitulation, and permitted them to return in ſafety to their native country. But the loſſes which they ſuffered in the march, the battle, and the retreat, broke the power of the nation: nor is the Lygian name ever repeated in the hiſtory either of Germany or of the empire. The deliverance of Gaul is reported to have coſt the lives of four hundred thouſand of the invaders; a work of labour to the Romans, and of expence to the emperor, who gave a piece of gold for the head of every barbarian". But as the fame of warriors is built on the deſtruction of human kind, we may naturally ſuſpect, that the ſanguinary account was multiplied by the avarice of the ſoldiers, and accepted without any

very ſevere examination by the liberal vanity of Probus. CHAP. XII.

and carries his arms into Germany.

Since the expedition of Maximin, the Roman generals had confined their ambition to a defenſive war againſt the nations of Germany, who perpetually preſſed on the frontiers of the empire. The more daring Probus purſued his Gallic victories, paſſed the Rhine, and diſplayed his invincible eagles on the banks of the Elbe and the Necker. He was fully convinced, that nothing could reconcile the minds of the barbarians to peace, unleſs they experienced in their own country the calamities of war. Germany, exhauſted by the ill ſucceſs of the laſt emigration, was aſtoniſhed by his preſence. Nine of the moſt conſiderable princes repaired to his camp, and fell proſtrate at his feet. Such a treaty was humbly received by the Germans, as it pleaſed the conqueror to dictate. He exacted a ſtrict reſtitution of the effects and captives which they had carried away from the provinces; and obliged their own magiſtrates to puniſh the more obſtinate robbers who preſumed to detain any part of the ſpoil. A conſiderable tribute of corn, cattle, and horſes, the only wealth of barbarians, was reſerved for the uſe of the garriſons which Probus eſtabliſhed on the limits of their territory. He even entertained ſome thoughts of compelling the Germans to relinquish the exerciſe of arms, and to truſt their differences to the juſtice, their ſafety to the power, of Rome. To accompliſh theſe ſalutary ends, the conſtant reſidence of an

CHAP. XII.

Imperial governor, ſupported by a numerous army, was indiſpenſably requiſite. Probus therefore judged it more expedient to defer the execution of ſo great a deſign; which was indeed rather of ſpecious than ſolid utility [40]. Had Germany been reduced into the ſtate of a province, the Romans, with immenſe labour and expence, would have acquired only a more extenſive boundary to defend againſt the fiercer and more active barbarians of Scythia.

He builds a wall from the Rhine to the Danube.

Inſtead of reducing the warlike natives of Germany to the condition of ſubjects, Probus contented himſelf with the humble expedient of raiſing a bulwark againſt their inroads. The country, which now forms the circle of Swabia, had been left deſert in the age of Auguſtus by the emigration of its ancient inhabitants [41]. The fertility of the ſoil ſoon attracted a new colony from the adjacent provinces of Gaul. Crowds of adventurers, of a roving temper and of deſperate fortunes, occupied the doubtful poſſeſſion, and acknowledged, by the payment of tythes, the majeſty of the empire [42]. To protect theſe new ſubjects, a line of frontier garriſons was gradually extended from the Rhine to the Danube. About the reign of Hadrian, when that mode of defence began to be practiſed, theſe garriſons were connected and covered by a ſtrong intrenchment of trees and paliſades. In the place of ſo rude a bulwark, the emperor Probus conſtructed a ſtone-wall of a conſiderable height, and ſtrengthened it by towers at convenient diſtances. From the neighbourhood of Newſtadt and Ratisbon on the Danube, it ſtretched acroſs hills,

vallies, rivers, and moraſſes, as far as Wimpfen on the Necker, and at length terminated on the banks of the Rhine, after a winding courſe of near two hundred miles [41]. This important barrier, uniting the two mighty ſtreams that protected the provinces of Europe, ſeemed to fill up the vacant ſpace through which the barbarians, and particularly the Alemanni, could penetrate with the greateſt facility into the heart of the empire. But the experience of the world from China to Britain, has expoſed the vain attempt of fortifying any extenſive tract of country [42]. An active enemy, who can ſelect and vary his points of attack, muſt, in the end, diſcover ſome feeble ſpot or ſome unguarded moment. The ſtrength, as well as the attention, of the defenders is divided; and ſuch are the blind effects of terror on the firmeſt troops, that a line broken in a ſingle place is almoſt inſtantly deſerted. The fate of the wall which Probus erected, may confirm the general obſervation. Within a few years after his death, it was overthrown by the Alemanni. Its ſcattered ruins, univerſally aſcribed to the power of the Dæmon, now ſerve only to excite the wonder of the Swabian peaſant. CHAP. XII.

Among the uſeful conditions of peace impoſed by Probus on the vanquished nations of Germany, was the obligation of ſupplying the Roman army with ſixteen thouſand recruits, the braveſt and moſt robuſt of their youth. The emperor diſperſed them through all the provinces, and diſtributed this dangerous reinforcement in ſmall bands of fifty or ſixty Introduction and ſettlement of the barbarians.

CHAP. XII.

each, among the national troops; judiciously obſerving, that the aid which the republic derived from the barbarians, should be felt but not ſeen [41]. Their aid was now become neceſſary. The feeble elegance of Italy and the internal provinces could no longer ſupport the weight of arms. The hardy frontier of the Rhine and Danube ſtill produced minds and bodies equal to the labours of the camp; but a perpetual ſeries of wars had gradually diminiſhed their numbers. The infrequency of marriage, and the ruin of agriculture, affected the principles of population; and not only deſtroyed the ſtrength of the preſent, but intercepted the hope of future generations. The wiſdom of Probus embraced a great and beneficial plan of replenishing the exhauſted frontiers, by new colonies of captive or fugitive barbarians, on whom he beſtowed lands, cattle, inſtruments of husbandry, and every encouragement that might engage them to educate a race of ſoldiers for the ſervice of the republic. Into Britain, and moſt probably into Cambridgeſhire [42], he tranſported a conſiderable body of Vandals. The impoſſibility of an eſcape reconciled them to their ſituation, and in the ſubſequent troubles of that island, they approved themſelves the moſt faithful ſervants of the ſtate [43]. Great numbers of Franks and Gepidæ were ſettled on the banks of the Danube and the Rhine. An hundred thouſand Baſtarnæ, expelled from their own country, cheerfully accepted an eſtabliſhment in Thrace, and ſoon imbibed the manners and ſentiments of Roman ſubjects [44]. But the expectations of Probus were too often diſap-

pointed. The impatience and idleneſs of the barbarians could ill brook the ſlow labours of agriculture. Their unconquerable love of freedom, riſing againſt deſpotiſm, provoked them into haſty rebellions, alike fatal to themſelves and to the provinces [49]; nor could theſe artificial ſupplies, however repeated by ſucceeding emperors, reſtore the important limit of Gaul and Illyricum to its ancient and native vigour. CHAP. XII.

Daring enterpriſe of the Franks.

Of all the barbarians who abandoned their new ſettlements, and diſturbed the public tranquillity, a very ſmall number returned to their own country. For a short ſeaſon they might wander in arms through the empire; but in the end they were ſurely deſtroyed by the power of a warlike emperor. The ſucceſsful rashneſs of a party of Franks was attended, however, with ſuch memorable conſequences, that it ought not to be paſſed unnoticed. They had been eſtabliſhed by Probus, on the ſea-coaſt of Pontus, with a view of ſtrengthening the frontier againſt the inroads of the Alani. A fleet ſtationed in one of the harbours of the Euxine, fell into the hands of the Franks; and they reſolved, through unknown ſeas, to explore their way from the mouth of the Phaſis to that of the Rhine. They eaſily eſcaped through the Boſphorus and the Helleſpont, and cruizing along the Mediterranean, indulged their appetite for revenge and plunder, by frequent deſcents on the unſuſpecting ſhores of Aſia, Greece, and Africa. The opulent city of Syracuſe, in whoſe port the navies of Athens and Carthage had formerly been ſunk, was ſacked by

CHAP. XII.

a handful of barbarians, who maſſacred the greateſt part of the trembling inhabitants. From the island of Sicily, the Franks proceeded to the columns of Hercules, truſted themſelves to the ocean, coaſted round Spain and Gaul, and ſteering their triumphant courſe through the British channel, at length finished their ſurpriſing voyage, by landing in ſafety on the Batavian or Friſian ſhores [12]. The example of their ſucceſs, inſtructing their countrymen to conceive the advantages, and to deſpiſe the dangers, of the ſea, pointed out to their enterpriſing ſpirit, a new road to wealth and glory.

Revolt of Saturninus in the Eaſt;

Notwithſtanding the vigilance and activity of Probus, it was almoſt impoſſible that he could at once contain in obedience every part of his wide-extended dominions. The barbarians, who broke their chains, had ſeized the favourable opportunity of a domeſtic war. When the emperor marched to the relief of Gaul, he devolved the command of the Eaſt on Saturninus. That general, a man of merit and experience, was driven into rebellion by the abſence of his ſovereign, the levity of the Alexandrian people, the preſſing inſtances of his friends, and his own fears; but from the moment of his elevation, he never entertained a hope of empire, or even of life. „ Alas! „ he ſaid, „ the republic has loſt a uſeful ſervant, and the „ raſhneſs of an hour has deſtroyed the ſervices of „ many years. You know not, „ continued he, „ the miſery of ſovereign power; a ſword is per- „ petually ſuſpended over our head. We dread „ our very guards, we diſtruſt our companions.

„ The choice of action or of repoſe is no longer CHAP. XII.
„ in our diſpoſition, nor is there any age, or
„ character, or conduct, that can protect us from
„ the cenſure of envy. In thus exalting me to the
„ throne, you have doomed me to a life of cares,
„ and to an untimely fate. The only conſolation
„ which remains is, the aſſurance that I shall not
„ fall alone [11]. „ But as the former part of his prediction was verified by the victory, ſo the latter was diſappointed by the clemency of Probus. That amiable prince attempted even to ſave the unhappy Saturninus from the fury of the ſoldiers. He had more than once ſolicited the uſurper himſelf, to A. D. 272. place ſome confidence in the mercy of a ſovereign who ſo highly eſteemed his character, that he had punished, as a malicious informer, the firſt who related the improbable news of his defection [12]. Saturninus might, perhaps, have embraced the generous offer, had he not been reſtrained by the obſtinate diſtruſt of his adherents. Their guilt was deeper, and their hopes more ſanguine, than thoſe of their experienced leader.

The revolt of Saturninus was ſcarcely extinguished A. D. 280. of Bonoſus and Proculus in Gaul. in the Eaſt, before new troubles were excited in the Weſt, by the rebellion of Bonoſus and Proculus in Gaul. The moſt diſtinguished merit of thoſe two officers was their reſpective proweſs, of the one in the combats of Bacchus, of the other in thoſe of Venus [13], yet neither of them were deſtitute of courage and capacity, and both ſuſtained, with honour, the auguſt character which the fear of punishment had engaged them to aſſume, till

CHAP. XII.

they ſunk at length beneath the ſuperior genius of Probus. He uſed the victory with his accuſtomed moderation, and ſpared the fortunes as well as the lives of their innocent families [54].

A. D. 281. Triumph of the emperor Probus.

The arms of Probus had now ſuppreſſed all the foreign and domeſtic enemies of the ſtate. His mild but ſteady adminiſtration confirmed the re-eſtabliſhment of the public tranquillity; nor was there left in the provinces a hoſtile barbarian, a tyrant, or even a robber, to revive the memory of paſt diſorders. It was time that the emperor ſhould reviſit Rome, and celebrate his own glory and the general happineſs. The triumph due to the valour of Probus was conducted with a magnificence ſuitable to his fortune, and the people who had ſo lately admired the trophies of Aurelian, gazed with equal pleaſure on thoſe of his heroic ſucceſſor [55]. We cannot, on this occaſion, forget the deſperate courage of about fourſcore Gladiators, reſerved with near ſix hundred others, for the inhuman ſports of the amphitheatre. Diſdaining to ſhed their blood for the amuſement of the populace, they killed their keepers, broke from the place of their confinement, and filled the ſtreets of Rome with blood and confuſion. After an obſtinate reſiſtance, they were overpowered and cut in pieces by the regular forces; but they obtained at leaſt an honourable death, and the ſatisfaction of a juſt revenge [56].

His diſcipline.

The military diſcipline which reigned in the camps of Probus, was leſs cruel than that of Aurelian, but it was equally rigid and exact. The

latter had punished the irregularities of the ſoldiers with unrelenting ſeverity, the former prevented them by employing the legions in conſtant and uſeful labours. When Probus commanded in Egypt, he executed many conſiderable works for the ſplendour and benefit of that rich country. The navigation of the Nile, ſo important to Rome itſelf, was improved; and temples, bridges, porticoes, and palaces, were conſtructed by the hands of the ſoldiers, who acted by turns as architects, as engineers, and as husbandmen [17]. It was reported of Hannibal, that, in order to preſerve his troops from the dangerous temptations of idleneſs, he had obliged them to form large plantations of olive trees along the coaſt of Africa [18]. From a ſimilar principle, Probus exerciſed his legions in covering, with rich vineyards, the hills of Gaul and Pannonia, and two conſiderable ſpots are deſcribed, which were entirely dug and planted by military labour [19]. One of theſe, known under the name of Mount Almo, was ſituated near Sirmium, the country where Probus was born, for which he ever retained a partial affection, and whoſe gratitude he endeavoured to ſecure, by converting into tillage a large and unhealthy tract of marſhy ground. An army thus employed, conſtituted perhaps the moſt uſeful, as well as the braveſt, portion of Roman ſubjects.

CHAP. XII.

But in the proſecution of a favourite ſcheme, the beſt of men, ſatisfied with the rectitude of their intentions, are ſubject to forget the bounds of moderation; nor did Probus himſelf ſufficiently

His death.

CHAP. XII.

consult the patience and disposition of his fierce legionaries [60]. The dangers of the military profession seem only to be compensated by a life of pleasure and idleness; but if the duties of the soldier are incessantly aggravated by the labours of the peasant, he will at last sink under the intolerable burden, or shake it off with indignation. The imprudence of Probus is said to have inflamed the discontent of his troops. More attentive to the interests of mankind than to those of the army, he expressed the vain hope, that, by the establishment of universal peace, he should soon abolish the necessity of a standing and mercenary force [61]. The unguarded expression proved fatal to him. In one of the hottest days of summer, as he severely urged the unwholesome labour of draining the marshes of Sirmium, the soldiers, impatient of fatigue, on a sudden threw down their tools, grasped their arms, and broke out into a furious mutiny. The emperor, conscious of his danger, took refuge in a lofty tower, constructed for the purpose of surveying the progress of the work [62]. The tower was instantly forced, and a thousand swords were plunged at once into the bosom of the unfortunate Probus. The rage of the troops subsided as soon as it had been gratified. They then lamented their fatal rashness, forgot the severity of the emperor, whom they had massacred, and hastened to perpetuate, by an honourable monument, the memory of his virtues and victories [63].

A. D. 282. August.

Election and character of Carus.

When the legions had indulged their grief and repentance for the death of Probus, their unanimous

CHAP. XII.

consent declared Carus, his Prætorian præfect, the most deserving of the Imperial throne. Every circumstance that relates to this prince appears of a mixed and doubtful nature. He gloried in the title of Roman Citizen; and affected to compare the purity of *his* blood, with the foreign and even barbarous origin of the preceding emperors; yet the most inquisitive of his contemporaries, very far from admitting his claim, have variously deduced his own birth, or that of his parents, from Illyricum, from Gaul, or from Africa [t]. Though a soldier, he had received a learned education; though a senator, he was invested with the first dignity of the army; and in an age, when the civil and military professions began to be irrecoverably separated from each other, they were united in the person of Carus. Notwithstanding the severe justice which he exercised against the assassins of Probus, to whose favour and esteem he was highly indebted, he could not escape the suspicion of being accessary to a deed from whence he derived the principal advantage. He enjoyed, at least before his elevation, an acknowledged character of virtue and abilities [u]; but his austere temper insensibly degenerated into moroseness and cruelty; and the imperfect writers of his life almost hesitate whether they shall not rank him in the number of Roman tyrants [w]. When Carus assumed the purple, he was about sixty years of age, and his two sons Carinus and Numerian had already attained the season of manhood [x].

CHAP. XII.

The ſentiments of the ſenate and people.

The authority of the ſenate expired with Probus; nor was the repentance of the ſoldiers diſplayed by the ſame dutiful regard for the civil power, which they had teſtified after the unfortunate death of Aurelian. The election of Carus was decided without expecting the approbation of the ſenate, and the new emperor contented himſelf with announcing, in a cold and ſtately epiſtle, that he had aſcended the vacant throne [69]. A behaviour ſo very oppoſite to that of his amiable predeceſſor, afforded no favourable preſage of the new reign; and the Romans, deprived of power and freedom, aſſerted their privilege of licentious murmurs [70]. The voice of congratulation and flattery was not however ſilent; and we may ſtill peruſe, with pleaſure and contempt, an eclogue, which was compoſed on the acceſſion of the emperor Carus. Two ſhepherds, avoiding the noon-tide heat, retire into the cave of Faunus. On a ſpreading beech they diſcover ſome recent characters. The rural deity had deſcribed, in prophetic verſes, the felicity promiſed to the empire, under the reign of ſo great a prince. Faunus hails the approach of that hero, who, receiving on his ſhoulders the ſinking weight of the Roman world, ſhall extinguish war and faction, and once again reſtore the innocence and ſecurity of the golden age [71].

Carus defeats the Sarmatians, and marches into the Eaſt;

It is more than probable, that theſe elegant trifles never reached the ears of a veteran general, who, with the conſent of the legions, was preparing to execute the long ſuſpended deſign of the Perſian war. Before his departure for this diſtant expedition,

Carus conferred on his two ſons, Carinus and Numerian, the title of Cæſar, and inveſting the former with almoſt an equal ſhare of the Imperial power, directed the young prince, firſt to ſuppreſs ſome troubles which had ariſen in Gaul, and afterwards to fix the ſeat of his reſidence at Rome, and to aſſume the government of the weſtern provinces [71]. The ſafety of Illyricum was confirmed by a memorable defeat of the Sarmatians; ſixteen thouſand of thoſe barbarians remained on the field of battle, and the number of captives amounted to twenty thouſand. The old emperor, animated with the fame and proſpect of victory, purſued his march, in the midſt of winter, through the countries of Thrace and Aſia Minor, and at length, with his younger ſon Numerian, arrived on the confines of the Perſian monarchy. There, encamping on the ſummit of a lofty mountain, he pointed out to his troops the opulence and luxury of the enemy whom they were about to invade. CHAP. XII.

A. D. 283. he gives audience to the Perſian ambaſſadors.

The ſucceſſor of Artaxerxes, Varanes or Bahram, though he had ſubdued the Segeſtans, one of the moſt warlike nations of Upper Aſia [72], was alarmed at the approach of the Romans, and endeavoured to retard their progreſs by a negociation of peace. His ambaſſadors entered the camp about ſun-ſet, at the time when the troops were ſatisfying their hunger with a frugal repaſt. The Perſians expreſſed their deſire of being introduced to the preſence of the Roman emperor. They were at length conducted to a ſoldier, who was ſeated on the graſs. A

CHAP. XII.

piece of ſtale bacon and a few hard peaſe compoſed his ſupper. A coarſe woollen garment of purple was the only circumſtance that announced his dignity. The conference was conducted with the ſame diſregard of courtly elegance. Carus, taking off a cap which he wore to conceal his baldneſs, aſſured the ambaſſadors, that, unleſs their maſter acknowledged the ſuperiority of Rome, he would ſpeedily render Perſia as naked of trees, as his own head was deſtitute of hair [73]. Notwithſtanding ſome traces of art and preparation, we may diſcover in this ſcene the manners of Carus, and the ſevere ſimplicity which the martial princes, who ſucceeded Gallienus, had already reſtored in the Roman camps. The miniſters of the Great King trembled and retired.

His victories and extraordinary death.

The threats of Carus were not without effect. He ravaged Meſopotamia, cut in pieces whatever oppoſed his paſſage, made himſelf maſter of the great cities of Seleucia and Cteſiphon (which ſeemed to have ſurrendered without reſiſtance), and carried his victorious arms beyond the Tigris [74]. He had ſeized the favourable moment for an invaſion. The Perſian councils were diſtracted by domeſtic factions, and the greater part of their forces were detained on the frontiers of India. Rome and the Eaſt received with tranſport the news of ſuch important advantages. Flattery and hope painted, in the moſt lively colours, the fall of Perſia, the conqueſt of Arabia, the ſubmiſſion of Egypt, and a laſting deliverance from the inroads of the Scythian nations [75]. But the reign of Carus was deſtined

CHAP. XII. A. D. 283. Dec. 25.

deſtined to expoſe the vanity of predictions. They were ſcarcely uttered before they were contradicted by his death; an event attended with ſuch ambiguous circumſtances, that it may beſt be related in a letter from his own ſecretary to the præfect of the city. „ Carus," ſays he, " our deareſt emperor, „ was confined by ſickneſs to his bed, when a „ furious tempeſt aroſe in the camp. The darkneſs „ which overſpread the ſky was ſo thick, that „ we could no longer diſtinguish each other; and „ the inceſſant flashes of lightning took from us „ the knowledge of all that paſſed in the general „ confuſion. Immediately after the moſt violent „ clap of thunder, we heard a ſudden cry, that „ the emperor was dead; and it ſoon appeared, „ that his chamberlains, in a rage of grief, had „ ſet fire to the royal pavilion, a circumſtance „ which gave riſe to the report that Carus was „ killed by lightning. But, as far as we have been „ able to inveſtigate the truth, his death was the „ natural effect of his diſorder [74]. "

He is ſucceeded by his two ſons Carinus and Numerian.

The vacancy of the throne was not productive of any diſturbance. The ambition of the aſpiring generals was checked by their mutual fears, and young Numerian, with his abſent brother Carinus, were unanimously acknowledged as Roman emperors. The public expected that the ſucceſſor of Carus would purſue his father's footſteps, and without allowing the Perſians to recover from their conſternation, would advance ſword in hand to the palaces of Suſa and Ecbatana [77]. But the legions, however ſtrong in numbers and diſcipline,

CHAP. XII.

were dismayed by the most abject superstition. Notwithstanding all the arts that were practised to disguise the manner of the late emperor's death, it was found impossible to remove the opinion of the multitude, and the power of opinion is irresistible. Places or persons struck with lightning were considered by the ancients with pious horror, as singularly devoted to the wrath of Heaven [78]. An oracle was remembered, which marked the river Tigris as the fatal boundary of the Roman arms. The troops, terrified with the fate of Carus and with their own danger, called aloud on young Numerian to obey the will of the gods, and to lead them away from this inauspicious scene of war. The feeble emperor was unable to subdue their obstinate prejudice, and the Persians wondered at the unexpected retreat of a victorious enemy [79].

A. D. 384. Vices of Carinus.

The intelligence of the mysterious fate of the late emperor, was soon carried from the frontiers of Persia to Rome; and the senate, as well as the provinces, congratulated the accession of the sons of Carus. These fortunate youths were strangers, however, to that conscious superiority, either of birth or of merit, which can alone render the possession of a throne easy, and as it were natural. Born and educated in a private station, the election of their father raised them at once to the rank of princes; and his death, which happened about sixteen months afterwards, left them the unexpected legacy of a vast empire. To sustain with temper this rapid elevation, an uncommon

share of virtue and prudence was requiſite; and Carinus, the elder of the brothers, was more than commonly deficient in thoſe qualities. In the Gallic war, he diſcovered ſome degree of perſonal courage [a]; but from the moment of his arrival at Rome, he abandoned himſelf to the luxury of the capital, and to the abuſe of his fortune. He was ſoft yet cruel; devoted to pleaſure, but deſtitute of taſte; and though exquiſitely ſuſceptible of vanity, indifferent to the public eſteem. In the courſe of a few months, he ſucceſſively married and divorced nine wives, moſt of whom he left pregnant; and notwithſtanding this legal inconſtancy, found time to indulge ſuch a variety of irregular appetites, as brought diſhonour on himſelf and on the nobleſt houſes of Rome. He beheld with inveterate hatred all thoſe who might remember his former obſcurity, or cenſure his preſent conduct. He baniſhed, or put to death, the friends and counſellors whom his father had placed about him, to guide his inexperienced youth; and he perſecuted with the meaneſt revenge his ſchool-fellows and companions, who had not ſufficiently reſpected the latent majeſty of the emperor. With the ſenators, Carinus affected a lofty and regal demeanour, frequently declaring, that he deſigned to diſtribute their eſtates among the populace of Rome. From the dregs of that populace, he ſelected his favourites, and even his miniſters. The palace, and even the Imperial table, was filled with ſingers, dancers, proſtitutes, and all the various retinue of vice and folly. One of his door-keepers [a] he

CHAP. XII.

CHAP. XII.

intruſted with the government of the city. In the room of the Prætorian præfect, whom he put to death, Carinus ſubſtituted one of the miniſters of his looſer pleaſures. Another who poſſeſſed the ſame, or even a more infamous, title to favour, was inveſted with the conſulſhip. A confidential ſecretary, who had acquired uncommon skill in the art of forgery, delivered the indolent emperor, with his own conſent, from the irkſome duty of ſigning his name.

When the emperor Carus undertook the Perſian war, he was induced, by motives of affection as well as policy, to ſecure the fortunes of his family, by leaving in the hands of his eldeſt ſon the armies and provinces of the Weſt. The intelligence which he ſoon received of the conduct of Carinus, filled him with ſhame and regret; nor had he concealed his reſolution of ſatisfying the republic by a ſevere act of juſtice, and of adopting, in the place of an unworthy ſon, the brave and virtuous Conſtantius, who at that time was governor of Dalmatia. But the elevation of Conſtantius was for a while deferred; and as ſoon as the father's death had releaſed Carinus from the controul of fear or decency, he diſplayed to the Romans the extravagancies of Elagabalus, aggravated by the cruelty of Domitian [82].

He celebrates the Roman games.

The only merit of the adminiſtration of Carinus that hiſtory could record or poetry celebrate, was the uncommon ſplendour with which, in his own and his brother's name, he exhibited the Roman games of the theatre, the circus, and the amphitheatre. More than twenty years afterwards, when

the courtiers of Diocletian repreſented to their frugal ſovereign the fame and popularity of his munificent predeceſſor, he acknowledged, that the reign of Carinus had indeed been a reign of pleaſure [11]. But this vain prodigality, which the prudence of Diocletian might juſtly deſpiſe, was enjoyed with ſurpriſe and tranſport by the Roman people. The oldeſt of the citizens, recollecting the ſpectacles of former days, the triumphal pomp of Probus or Aurelian, and the ſecular games of the emperor Philip, acknowledged that they were all ſurpaſſed by the ſuperior magnificence of Carinus [12]. CHAP. XII.

Spectacles of Rome.

The ſpectacles of Carinus may therefore be beſt illuſtrated by the obſervation of ſome particulars, which hiſtory has condeſcended to relate concerning thoſe of his predeceſſors. If we confine ourſelves ſolely to the hunting of wild beaſts, however we may cenſure the vanity of the deſign or the cruelty of the execution, we are obliged to confeſs, that neither before nor ſince the time of the Romans, ſo much art and expence have ever been lavished for the amuſement of the people [13]. By the order of Probus, a great quantity of large trees, torn up by the roots, were tranſplanted into the midſt of the circus. The ſpacious and ſhady foreſt was immediately filled with a thouſand oſtriches, a thouſand ſtags, a thouſand fallow deer, and a thouſand wild boars; and all this variety of game was abandoned to the riotous impetuoſity of the multitude. The tragedy of the ſucceeding day conſiſted in the maſſacre of an hundred lions, an equal

CHAP. XII.

number of lioneſſes, two hundred leopards, and three hundred bears [86]. The collection prepared by the younger Gordian for his triumph, and which his ſucceſſor exhibited in the ſecular games, was leſs remarkable by the number than by the ſingularity of the animals. Twenty zebras diſplayed their elegant forms and variegated beauty to the eyes of the Roman people [87]. Ten elks, and as many camelopards, the loftieſt and moſt harmleſs creatures that wander over the plains of Sarmatia and Æthiopia, were contraſted with thirty African hyænas, and ten Indian tygers, the moſt implacable ſavages of the torrid zone. The unoffending ſtrength with which Nature has endowed the greater quadrupeds, was admired in the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus of the Nile [88], and a majeſtic troop of thirty-two elephants [89]. While the populace gazed with ſtupid wonder on the ſplendid ſhow, the naturaliſt might indeed obſerve the figure and properties of ſo many different ſpecies, tranſported from every part of the ancient world into the amphitheatre of Rome. But this accidental benefit, which ſcience might derive from folly, is ſurely inſufficient to juſtify ſuch a wanton abuſe of the public riches. There occurs, however, a ſingle inſtance in the firſt Punic war, in which the ſenate wiſely connected this amuſement of the multitude with the intereſt of the ſtate. A conſiderable number of elephants, taken in the defeat of the Carthaginian army, were driven through the circus by a few ſlaves, armed only with blunt javelins [90]. The uſeful ſpectacle ſerved to impreſs the Roman ſoldier with a juſt contempt for thoſe

unwieldy animals; and he no longer dreaded to encounter them in the ranks of war. CHAP. XII.

The hunting or exhibition of wild beasts, was conducted with a magnificence suitable to a people who styled themselves the masters of the world; nor was the edifice appropriated to that entertainment less expressive of Roman greatness. Posterity admires, and will long admire, the awful remains of the amphitheatre of Titus, which so well deserved the epithet of Colossal [71]. It was a building of an elliptic figure, five hundred and sixty four feet in length, and four hundred and sixty-seven in breadth, founded on fourscore arches, and rising, with four successive orders of architecture, to the height of one hundred and forty feet [72]. The outside of the edifice was encrusted with marble, and decorated with statues. The slopes of the vast concave, which formed the inside, were filled and surrounded with sixty or eighty rows of seats of marble likewise, covered with cushions, and capable of receiving with ease above fourscore thousand spectators [73]. Sixty-four *vomitories* (for by that name the doors were very aptly distinguished) poured forth the immense multitude; and the entrances, passages, and stair-cases, were contrived with such exquisite skill, that each person, whether of the senatorial, the equestrian, or the plebeian order, arrived at his destined place without trouble or confusion [74]. Nothing was omitted which, in any respect, could be subservient to the convenience and pleasure of the spectators. They were protected from the sun and rain by an ample canopy, occa- The amphitheatre.

CHAP. XII.

ſionally drawn over their heads. The air was continually refreſhed by the playing of fountains, and profuſely impregnated by the grateful ſcent of aromatics. In the centre of the edifice, the *arena*, or ſtage, was ſtrewed with the fineſt ſand, and ſucceſſively aſſumed the moſt different forms. At one moment it ſeemed to riſe out of the earth, like the garden of the Heſperides, and was afterwards broken into the rocks and caverns of Thrace. The ſubterraneous pipes conveyed an inexhauſtible ſupply of water; and what had juſt before appeared a level plain, might be ſuddenly converted into a wide lake, covered with armed veſſels, and replenished with the monſters of the deep [95]. In the decoration of theſe ſcenes, the Roman emperors diſplayed their wealth and liberality; and we read on various occaſions, that the whole furniture of the amphitheatre conſiſted either of ſilver, or of gold, or of amber [96]. The poet who deſcribes the games of Carinus, in the character of a ſhepherd attracted to the capital by the fame of their magnificence, affirms, that the nets deſigned as a defence againſt the wild beaſts, were of gold wire; that the porticoes were gilded, and that the *belt* or circle which divided the ſeveral ranks of ſpectators from each other, was ſtudded with a precious Moſaic of beautiful ſtones [97].

A. D. 284, Sept. 12.

In the midſt of this glittering pageantry, the emperor Carinus, ſecure of his fortune, enjoyed the acclamations of the people, the flattery of his courtiers, and the ſongs of the poets, who, for want of a more eſſential merit, were reduced to

celebrate the divine graces of his perſon [99]. In the ſame hour, but at the diſtance of nine hundred miles from Rome, his brother expired; and a ſudden revolution transferred into the hands of a ſtranger the ſceptre of the houſe of Carus [99]. CHAP. XII.

Return of Numerian with the army from Perſia.

The ſons of Carus never ſaw each other after their father's death. The arrangements which their new ſituation required, were probably deferred till the return of the younger brother to Rome, where a triumph was decreed to the young emperors, for the glorious ſucceſs of the Perſian war [100]. It is uncertain whether they intended to divide between them the adminiſtration, or the provinces, of the empire; but it is very unlikely that their union would have proved of any long duration. The jealouſy of power muſt have been inflamed by the oppoſition of characters. In the moſt corrupt of times, Carinus was unworthy to live: Numerian deſerved to reign in a happier period. His affable manners and gentle virtues ſecured him, as ſoon as they became known, the regard and affections of the public. He poſſeſſed the elegant accompliſhments of a poet and orator, which dignify as well as adorn the humbleſt and the moſt exalted ſtation. His eloquence, however it was applauded by the ſenate, was formed not ſo much on the model of Cicero, as on that of the modern declaimers; but in an age very far from being deſtitute of poetical merit, he contended for the prize with the moſt celebrated of his contemporaries, and ſtill remained the friend of his rivals; a circumſtance which evinces either the goodneſs of his heart, or the ſuperiority of his genius [101]. But the talents of Numerian were

CHAP. XII.

rather of the contemplative, than of the active kind. When his father's elevation reluctantly forced him from the shade of retirement, neither his temper nor his purſuits had qualified him for the command of armies. His conſtitution was deſtroyed by the hardships of the Perſian war; and he had contracted, from the heat of the climate [103], ſuch a weakneſs in his eyes, as obliged him, in the courſe of a long retreat, to confine himſelf to the ſolitude and darkneſs of a tent or litter. The adminiſtration of all affairs, civil as well as military, was devolved on Arrius Aper, the Prætorian præfect, who, to the power of his important office, added the honour of being father-in-law to Numerian. The Imperial pavilion was ſtrictly guarded by his moſt truſty adherents; and during many days, Aper delivered to the army the ſuppoſed mandates of their inviſible ſovereign [103].

Death of Numerian.

It was not till eight months after the death of Carus, that the Roman army, returning by ſlow marches from the banks of the Tigris, arrived on thoſe of the Thracian Boſphorus. The legions halted at Chalcedon in Aſia, while the court paſſed over to Heraclea, on the European ſide of the Propontis [104]. But a report ſoon circulated through the camp; at firſt in ſecret whiſpers, and at length in loud clamours, of the emperor's death, and of the preſumption of his ambitious miniſter, who ſtill exerciſed the ſovereign power in the name of a prince who was no more. The impatience of the ſoldiers could not long ſupport a ſtate of ſuſpenſe. With rude curioſity they broke into the Imperial tent, and diſcovered only the corpſe of Numerian [105].

The gradual decline of his health might have induced them to believe that his death was natural; but the concealment was interpreted as an evidence of guilt, and the meaſures which Aper had taken to ſecure his election, became the immediate occaſion of his ruin. Yet, even in the tranſport of their rage and grief, the troops obſerved a regular proceeding, which proves how firmly diſcipline had been re-eſtabliſhed by the martial ſucceſſors of Gallienus. A general aſſembly of the army was appointed to be held at Chalcedon, whither Aper was tranſported in chains, as a priſoner and a criminal. A vacant tribunal was erected in the midſt of the camp, and the generals and tribunes formed a great military council. They ſoon announced to the multitude, that their choice had fallen on Diocletian, commander of the domeſtics or body-guards, as the perſon the moſt capable of revenging and ſucceeding their beloved emperor. The future fortunes of the candidate depended on the chance or conduct of the preſent hour. Conſcious that the ſtation which he had filled, expoſed him to ſome ſuſpicions, Diocletian aſcended the tribunal, and raiſing his eyes towards the Sun, made a ſolemn profeſſion of his own innocence, in the preſence of that all-ſeeing Deity [106]. Then, aſſuming the tone of a ſovereign and a judge, he commanded that Aper ſhould be brought in chains to the foot of the tribunal. „ This man," ſaid he, „ is the murderer „ of Numerian;" and, without giving him time to enter on a dangerous juſtification, drew his ſword, and buried it in the breaſt of the unfortunate præfect. A charge ſupported by ſuch deciſive proof, was

A. D. 284. Sept. 17. Election of the emperor Diocletian.

CHAP. XII.

admitted without contradiction, and the legions, with repeated acclamations, acknowledged the juſtice and authority of the emperor Diocletian [107].

Defeat and death of Carinus.

Before we enter upon the memorable reign of that prince, it will be proper to punish and diſmiſs the unworthy brother of Numerian. Carinus poſſeſſed arms and treaſures ſufficient to ſupport his legal title to the empire. But his perſonal vices overbalanced every advantage of birth and ſituation. The moſt faithful ſervants of the father deſpiſed the incapacity, and dreaded the cruel arrogance, of the ſon. The hearts of the people were engaged in favour of his rival, and even the ſenate was inclined to prefer an uſurper to a tyrant. The arts of Diocletian inflamed the general diſcontent; and the winter was employed in ſecret intrigues, and

A. D. 285. May.

open preparations for a civil war. In the ſpring, the forces of the Eaſt and of the Weſt encountered each other in the plains of Margus, a ſmall city of Mæſia, in the neighbourhood of the Danube [108]. The troops, ſo lately returned from the Perſian war, had acquired their glory at the expence of health and numbers, nor were they in a condition to contend with the unexhauſted ſtrength of the legions of Europe. Their ranks were broken, and, for a moment, Diocletian deſpaired of the purple and of life. But the advantage which Carinus had obtained by the valour of his ſoldiers, he quickly loſt by the infidelity of his officers. A tribune, whoſe wife he had ſeduced, ſeized the opportunity of revenge, and by a ſingle blow extinguiſhed civil diſcord in the blood of the adulterer [109].

CHAP. XIII.

The reign of Diocletian and his three Aſſociates, Maximian, Galerius, and Conſtantius. — General Re-eſtabliſhment of Order and Tranquillity. — The Perſian War, Victory, and Triumph. — The new Form of Adminiſtration. — Abdication and Retirement of Diocletian and Maximian.

CHAP. XIII. Elevation and character of Diocletian. A. D. 285.

As the reign of Diocletian was more illuſtrious than that of any of his predeceſſors, ſo was his birth more abject and obſcure. The ſtrong claims of merit and of violence had frequently ſuperſeded the ideal prerogatives of nobility; but a diſtinct line of ſeparation was hitherto preſerved between the free and the ſervile part of mankind. The parents of Diocletian had been ſlaves in the houſe of Anulinus, a Roman ſenator; nor was he himſelf diſtinguished by any other name, than that which he derived from a ſmall town in Dalmatia, from whence his mother deduced her origin [1]. It is, however, probable, that his father obtained the freedom of the family, and that he ſoon acquired an office of ſcribe, which was commonly exerciſed by perſons of his condition [2]. Favourable oracles, or rather the conſciouſneſs of ſuperior merit, prompted his aſpiring ſon to purſue the profeſſion of arms and the hopes of fortune; and it would be extremely curious to obſerve the gradation of arts and accidents which enabled him in the end to fulfil thoſe oracles, and to diſplay that merit to

CHAP. XIII.

the world. Diocletian was ſucceſſively promoted to the government of Mæſia, the honours of the conſulſhip, and the important command of the guards of the palace. He diſtinguished his abilities in the Perſian war; and, after the death of Numerian, the slave, by the confeſſion and judgment of his rivals, was declared the moſt worthy of the Imperial throne. The malice of religious zeal, whilſt it arraigns the ſavage fierceneſs of his colleague Maximian, has affected to caſt ſuſpicions on the perſonal courage of the emperor Diocletian [3]. It would not be eaſy to perſuade us of the cowardice of a ſoldier of fortune, who acquired and preſerved the eſteem of the legions, as well as the favour of ſo many warlike princes. Yet even calumny is ſagacious enough to diſcover and to attack the moſt vulnerable part. The valour of Diocletian was never found inadequate to his duty or to the occaſion; but he appears not to have poſſeſſed the daring and generous ſpirit of a hero, who courts danger and fame, diſdains artifice, and boldly challenges the allegiance of his equals. His abilities were uſeful rather than ſplendid; a vigorous mind, improved by the experience and ſtudy of mankind; dexterity and application in buſineſs; a judicious mixture of liberality and œconomy, of mildneſs and rigour; profound diſſimulation under the diſguiſe of military frankneſs; ſteadineſs to purſue his ends; flexibility to vary his means; and above all, the great art of ſubmitting his own paſſions, as well as thoſe of others, to the intereſt of his ambition, and of colouring his ambition, with the moſt ſpecious pretences of juſtice and

public utility. Like Auguſtus, Diocletian may be conſidered as the founder of a new empire. Like the adopted ſon of Cæſar, he was diſtinguished as a ſtateſman rather than as a warrior; nor did either of thoſe princes employ force, whenever their purpoſe could be effected by policy.

His clemency and victory.

The victory of Diocletian was remarkable for its ſingular mildneſs. A people accuſtomed to applaud the clemency of the conqueror, if the uſual punishments of death, exile, and confiſcation were inflicted with any degree of temper and equity, beheld, with the moſt pleaſing aſtoniſhment, a civil war, the flames of which were extinguished in the field of battle. Diocletian received into his confidence Ariſtobulus, the principal miniſter of the houſe of Carus, reſpected the lives, the fortunes, and the dignity of his adverſaries, and even continued in their reſpective ſtations the greater number of the ſervants of Carinus [*]. It is not improbable that motives of prudence might aſſiſt the humanity of the artful Dalmatian; of theſe ſervants, many had purchaſed his favour by ſecret treachery; in others, he eſteemed their grateful fidelity to an unfortunate maſter. The diſcerning judgment of Aurelian, of Probus, and of Carus, had filled the ſeveral departments of the ſtate and army with officers of approved merit, whoſe removal would have injured the public ſervice, without promoting the intereſt of the ſucceſſor. Such a conduct, however, diſplayed to the Roman world the faireſt proſpect of the new reign, and the emperor affected to

CHAP. XIII.

confirm this favourable prepoſſeſſion, by declaring, that, among all the virtues of his predeceſſors, he was the moſt ambitious of imitating the humane philoſophy of Marcus Antoninus [5].

Aſſociation and character of Maximian. A. D. 286. April 1.

The firſt conſiderable action of his reign ſeemed to evince his ſincerity as well as his moderation. After the example of Marcus, he gave himſelf a colleague in the perſon of Maximian, on whom he beſtowed at firſt the title of Cæſar, and afterwards that of Auguſtus [6]. But the motives of his conduct, as well as the object of his choice, were of a very different nature from thoſe of his admired predeceſſor. By inveſting a luxurious youth with the honours of the purple, Marcus had diſcharged a debt of private gratitude, at the expence, indeed, of the happineſs of the ſtate. By aſſociating a friend and a fellow-ſoldier to the labours of government, Diocletian, in a time of public danger, provided for the defence both of the Eaſt and of the Weſt. Maximian was born a peaſant, and, like Aurelian, in the territory of Sirmium. Ignorant of letters [7], careleſs of laws, the ruſticity of his appearance and manners ſtill betrayed in the moſt elevated fortune the meanneſs of his extraction. War was the only art which he profeſſed. In a long courſe of ſervice he had diſtinguiſhed himſelf on every frontier of the empire; and though his military talents were formed to obey rather than to command, though, perhaps, he never attained the ſkill of a conſummate general, he was capable, by his valour, conſtancy, and experience, of executing the moſt arduous undertakings.

undertakings. Nor were the vices of Maximian leſs uſeful to his benefactor. Inſenſible to pity, and fearleſs of conſequences, he was the ready inſtrument of every act of cruelty which the policy of that artful prince might at once ſuggeſt and diſclaim. As ſoon as a bloody ſacrifice had been offered to prudence or to revenge, Diocletian, by his ſeaſonable interceſſion, ſaved the remaining few whom he had never deſigned to puniſh, gently cenſured the ſeverity of his ſtern colleague, and enjoyed the compariſon of a golden and an iron age, which was univerſally applied to their oppoſite maxims of government. Notwithſtanding the difference of their characters, the two emperors maintained, on the throne, that friendſhip which they had contracted in a private ſtation. The haughty turbulent ſpirit of Maximian, ſo fatal afterwards to himſelf and to the public peace, was accuſtomed to reſpect the genius of Diocletian, and confeſſed the aſcendant of reaſon over brutal violence [1]. From a motive either of pride or ſuperſtition, the two emperors aſſumed the titles, the one of Jovius, the other of Herculius. Whilſt the motion of the world (ſuch was the language of their venal orators) was maintained by the all-ſeeing wiſdom of Jupiter, the invincible arm of Hercules purged the earth from monſters and tyrants [2].

CHAP. XIII.

But even the omnipotence of Jovius and Herculius was inſufficient to ſuſtain the weight of the public adminiſtration. The prudence of Diocletian diſcovered, that the empire, aſſailed on every ſide,

Aſſociation of two Cæſars, Galerius

CHAP. XIII. and Conſtantius. A. D. 292. March 1.

by the barbarians, required on every ſide the preſence of a great army, and of an emperor. With this view he reſolved once more to divide his unwieldy power, and with the inferior title of *Cæſars*, to confer on two generals of approved merit an equal ſhare of the ſovereign authority [10]. Galerius, ſurnamed Armentarius, from his original profeſſion of a herdſman, and Conſtantius, who from his pale complexion had acquired the denomination of Chlorus [11], were the two perſons inveſted with the ſecond honours of the Imperial purple. In deſcribing the country, extraction, and manners of Herculius, we have already delineated thoſe of Galerius, who was often, and not improperly, ſtyled the younger Maximian, though, in many inſtances both of virtue and ability, he appears to have poſſeſſed a manifeſt ſuperiority over the elder. The birth of Conſtantius was leſs obſcure than that of his colleagues. Eutropius, his father, was one of the moſt conſiderable nobles of Dardania, and his mother was the niece of the emperor Claudius [12]. Although the youth of Conſtantius had been ſpent in arms, he was endowed with a mild and amiable diſpoſition, and the popular voice had long ſince acknowledged him worthy of the rank which he at laſt attained. To ſtrengthen the bonds of political, by thoſe of domeſtic union, each of the emperors aſſumed the character of a father to one of the Cæſars, Diocletian to Galerius, and Maximian to Conſtantius; and each obliging them to repudiate their former wives, beſtowed his daughter in marriage

on his adopted ſon [11]. Theſe four princes diſtributed among themſelves the wide extent of the Roman empire. The defence of Gaul, Spain [12], and Britain, was intruſted to Conſtantius: Galerius was ſtationed on the banks of the Danube, as the ſafeguard of the Illyrian provinces. Italy and Africa were conſidered as the department of Maximian; and for his peculiar portion, Diocletian reſerved Thrace, Egypt, and the rich countries of Aſia. Every one was ſovereign within his own juriſdiction; but their united authority extended over the whole monarchy; and each of them was prepared to aſſiſt his colleagues with his counſels or preſence. The Cæſars, in their exalted rank, revered the majeſty of the emperors, and the three younger princes invariably acknowledged, by their gratitude and obedience, the common parent of their fortunes. The ſuſpicious jealouſy of power found not any place among them; and the ſingular happineſs of their union has been compared to a chorus of muſic, whoſe harmony was regulated and maintained by the ſkilful hand of the firſt artiſt [13].

CHAP. XIII.

Departments and harmony of the four princes.

This important meaſure was not carried into execution till about ſix years after the aſſociation of Maximian, and that interval of time had not been deſtitute of memorable incidents. But we have preferred, for the ſake of perſpicuity, firſt to deſcribe the more perfect form of Diocletian's government, and afterwards to relate the actions of his reign, following rather the natural order of the events, than the dates of a very doubtful chronology.

Series of events.

CHAP. XIII. A. D. 287. State of the peaſants of Gaul.

The firſt exploit of Maximian, though it is mentioned in a few words by our imperfect writers, deſerves, from its ſingularity, to be recorded in a hiſtory of human manners. He ſuppreſſed the peaſants of Gaul, who, under the appellation of Bagaudæ [16], had riſen in a general inſurrection; very ſimilar to thoſe, which in the fourteenth century ſucceſſively afflicted both France and England [17]. It ſhould ſeem, that very many of thoſe inſtitutions, referred by an eaſy ſolution to the feudal ſyſtem, are derived from the Celtic barbarians. When Cæſar ſubdued the Gauls, that great nation was already divided into three orders of men; the clergy, the nobility, and the common people. The firſt governed by ſuperſtition, the ſecond by arms, but the third and laſt was not of any weight or account in their public councils. It was very natural for the Plebeians, oppreſſed by debt, or apprehenſive of injuries, to implore the protection of ſome powerful chief, who acquired over their perſons and property, the ſame abſolute rights as, among the Greeks and Romans, a maſter exerciſed over his ſlaves [18]. The greateſt part of the nation was gradually reduced into a ſtate of ſervitude; compelled to perpetual labour on the eſtates of the Gallic nobles, and confined to the ſoil, either by the real weight of fetters, or by the no leſs cruel and forcible reſtraints of the laws. During the long ſeries of troubles which agitated Gaul, from the reign of Gallienus to that of Diocletian, the condition of theſe ſervile peaſants was peculiarly miſerable; and they experienced at once the complicated tyranny of their maſters,

of the barbarians, of the ſoldiers, and of the officers of the revenue [19]. CHAP. XIII.

Their patience was at laſt provoked into deſpair. On every ſide they roſe in multitudes, armed with ruſtic weapons, and with irreſiſtible fury. The ploughman became a foot ſoldier, the ſhepherd mounted on horſeback, the deſerted villages and open towns were abandoned to the flames, and the ravages of the peaſants equalled thoſe of the fierceſt barbarians [20]. They aſſerted the natural rights of men, but they aſſerted thoſe rights with the moſt ſavage cruelty. The Gallic nobles juſtly dreading their revenge, either took refuge in the fortified cities, or fled from the wild ſcene of anarchy. The peaſants reigned without controul; and two of their moſt daring leaders had the folly and raſhneſs to aſſume the Imperial ornaments [21]. Their power ſoon expired at the approach of the legions. The ſtrength of union and diſcipline obtained an eaſy victory over a licentious and divided multitude [22]. A ſevere retaliation was inflicted on the peaſants who were found in arms; the affrighted remnant returned to their reſpective habitations, and their unſucceſsful effort for freedom ſerved only to confirm their ſlavery. So ſtrong and uniform is the current of popular paſſions, that we might almoſt venture, from very ſcanty materials, to relate the particulars of this war; but we are not diſpoſed to believe that the principal leaders Ælianus and Amandus were Chriſtians [23], or to inſinuate, that the rebellion, as it happened in the time of Luther, was occaſioned by the abuſe of thoſe

Their rebellion, and chaſtiſement.

CHAP. XIII.

benevolent principles of Chriſtianity, which inculcate the natural freedom of mankind.

A. D. 287. Revolt of Carauſius in Britain.

Maximian had no ſooner recovered Gaul from the hands of the peaſants, than he loſt Britain by the uſurpation of Carauſius. Ever ſince the raſh but ſucceſsful enterpriſe of the Franks under the reign of Probus, their daring countrymen had conſtructed ſquadrons of light brigantines, in which they inceſſantly ravaged the provinces adjacent to the ocean [24]. To repel their deſultory incurſions, it was found neceſſary to create a naval power; and the judicious meaſure was proſecuted with prudence and vigour. Geſſoriacum, or Boulogne, in the ſtraights of the British channel, was choſen by the emperor for the ſtation of the Roman fleet; and the command of it was intruſted to Carauſius, a Menapian of the meaneſt origin [25], but who had long ſignalized his skill as a pilot, and his valour as a ſoldier. The integrity of the new admiral correſponded not with his abilities When the German pirates ſailed from their own harbours, he connived at their paſſage, but he diligently intercepted their return, and appropriated to his own uſe an ample ſhare of the ſpoil which they had acquired. The wealth of Carauſius was, on this occaſion, very juſtly conſidered as an evidence of his guilt; and Maximian had already given orders for his death. But the crafty Menapian foreſaw and prevented the ſeverity of the emperor. By his liberality he had attached to his fortunes the fleet which he commanded, and ſecured the barbarians in his intereſt. From the port of Boulogne he

CHAP. XIII.

failed over to Britain, perſuaded the legion, and the auxiliaries which guarded that iſland, to embrace his party, and boldly aſſuming, with the Imperial purple, the title of Auguſtus, defied the juſtice and the arms of his injured ſovereign [16].

Importance of Britain.

When Britain was thus diſmembered from the empire, its importance was ſenſibly felt, and its loſs ſincerely lamented. The Romans celebrated, and perhaps magnified, the extent of that noble iſland, provided on every ſide with convenient harbours; the temperature of the climate, and the fertility of the ſoil, alike adapted for the production of corn or of vines; the valuable minerals with which it abounded; its rich paſtures covered with innumerable flocks, and its woods free from wild beaſts or venomous ſerpents. Above all, they regretted the large amount of the revenue of Britain, whilſt they confeſſed, that ſuch a province well deſerved to become the ſeat of an independent monarchy [17]. During the ſpace of ſeven years, it was poſſeſſed by Carauſius; and fortune continued propitious to a rebellion, ſupported with courage and ability. The British emperor defended the frontiers of his dominions againſt the Caledonians of the North, invited, from the continent, a great number of ſkilful artiſts, and diſplayed, on a variety of coins that are ſtill extant, his taſte and opulence. Born on the confines of the Franks, he courted the friendſhip of that formidable people, by the flattering imitation of their dreſs and manners. The braveſt of their youth he enliſted among his land or ſea forces; and in return for their uſeful

Power of Carauſius.

CHAP. XIII.

alliance, he communicated to the barbarians the dangerous knowledge of military and naval arts. Carausius still preserved the possession of Boulogne and the adjacent country. His fleets rode triumphant in the channel, commanded the mouths of the Seine and of the Rhine, ravaged the coasts of the ocean, and diffused beyond the columns of Hercules the terror of his name. Under his command, Britain, destined in a future age to obtain the empire of the sea, already assumed its natural and respectable station of a maritime power [28].

A. D. 289. acknowledged by the other emperors.

By seizing the fleet of Boulogne, Carausius had deprived his master of the means of pursuit and revenge. And when, after a vast expence of time and labour, a new armament was launched into the water [29], the Imperial troops, unaccustomed to that element, were easily baffled and defeated by the veteran sailors of the usurper. This disappointed effort was soon productive of a treaty of peace. Diocletian and his colleague, who justly dreaded the enterprising spirit of Carausius, resigned to him the sovereignty of Britain, and reluctantly admitted their perfidious servant to a participation of the Imperial honours [30]. But the adoption of the two Cæsars restored new vigour to the Roman arms; and while the Rhine was guarded by the presence of Maximian, his brave associate Constantius assumed the conduct of the British war. His first enterprise was against the important place of Boulogne. A stupendous mole, raised across the entrance of the harbour, intercepted all

A. D. 292. hopes of relief. The town surrendered after an

obſtinate defence; and a conſiderable part of the naval ſtrength of Carauſius fell into the hands of the beſiegers. During the three years which Conſtantius employed in preparing a fleet adequate to the conqueſt of Britain, he ſecured the coaſt of Gaul, invaded the country of the Franks, and deprived the uſurper of the aſſiſtance of thoſe powerful allies. CHAP. XIII.

Before the preparations were finiſhed, Conſtantius received the intelligence of the tyrant's death, and it was conſidered as a ſure preſage of the approaching victory. The ſervants of Carauſius imitated the example of treaſon, which he had given. He was murdered by his firſt miniſter Alectus, and the aſſaſſin ſucceeded to his power and to his danger. But he poſſeſſed not equal abilities either to exerciſe the one, or to repel the other. He beheld, with anxious terror, the oppoſite ſhores of the continent, already filled with arms, with troops, and with veſſels; for Conſtantius had very prudently divided his forces, that he might likewiſe divide the attention and reſiſtance of the enemy. The attack was at length made by the principal ſquadron, which, under the command of the præfect Aſclepiodatus, an officer of diſtinguiſhed merit, had been aſſembled in the mouth of the Seine. So imperfect in thoſe times was the art of navigation, that orators have celebrated the daring courage of the Romans, who ventured to ſet ſail with a ſide-wind, and on a ſtormy day. The weather proved favourable to their enterpriſe. Under the cover of a thick fog,

A. D. 294. His death.

A. D. 296. Recovery of Britain by Conſtantius.

CHAP. XIII.

they escaped the fleet of Alectus, which had been stationed off the Isle of Wight to receive them, landed in safety on some part of the western coast, and convinced the Britons, that a superiority of naval strength will not always protect their country from a foreign invasion. Asclepiodatus had no sooner disembarked the Imperial troops, than he set fire to his ships; and, as the expedition proved fortunate, his heroic conduct was universally admired. The usurper had posted himself near London, to expect the formidable attack of Constantius, who commanded in person the fleet of Boulogne; but the descent of a new enemy required his immediate presence in the West. He performed this long march in so precipitate a manner, that he encountered the whole force of the præfect with a small body of harassed and disheartened troops. The engagement was soon terminated by the total defeat and death of Alectus; a single battle, as it has often happened, decided the fate of this great island; and when Constantius landed on the shores of Kent, he found them covered with obedient subjects. Their acclamations were loud and unanimous; and the virtues of the conqueror may induce us to believe, that they sincerely rejoiced in a revolution, which, after a separation of ten years, restored Britain to the body of the Roman empire [11].

Defence of the frontiers.

Britain had none but domestic enemies to dread; and as long as the governors preserved their fidelity, and the troops their discipline, the incursions of the naked savages of Scotland or Ireland could

never materially affect the ſafety of the province. The peace of the continent, and the defence of the principal rivers which bounded the empire, were objects of far greater difficulty and importance. The policy of Diocletian, which inſpired the councils of his aſſociates, provided for the public tranquillity, by encouraging a ſpirit of diſſention among the barbarians, and by ſtrengthening the fortifications of the Roman limit. In the Eaſt he fixed a line of camps from Egypt to the Perſian dominions, and, for every camp, he inſtituted an adequate number of ſtationary troops, commanded by their reſpective officers, and ſupplied with every kind of arms, from the new arſenals which he had formed at Antioch, Emeſa, and Damaſcus [12]. Nor was the precaution of the emperor leſs watchful againſt the well-known valour of the barbarians of Europe. From the mouth of the Rhine to that of the Danube, the ancient camps, towns, and citadels, were diligently re-eſtabliſhed, and, in the moſt expoſed places, new ones were skilfully conſtructed; the ſtricteſt vigilance was introduced among the garriſons of the frontier, and every expedient was practiſed that could render the long chain of fortifications firm and impenetrable [13]. A barrier ſo reſpectable was ſeldom violated, and the barbarians often turned againſt each other their diſappointed rage. The Goths, the Vandals, the Gepidæ, the Burgundians, the Alemanni, waſted each other's ſtrength by deſtructive hoſtilities, and whoſoever vanquiſhed, they vanquiſhed the enemies of Rome. The ſubjects of Diocletian enjoyed

CHAP. XIII.

Fortifications.

Diſſentions of the barbarians.

CHAP. XIII.

the bloody ſpectacle, and congratulated each other, that the miſchiefs of civil war were now experienced only by the barbarians [54].

Conduct of the emperors.

Notwithſtanding the policy of Diocletian, it was impoſſible to maintain an equal and undiſturbed tranquillity during a reign of twenty years, and along a frontier of many hundred miles. Sometimes the barbarians ſuſpended their domeſtic animoſities, and the relaxed vigilance of the garriſons ſometimes gave a paſſage to their ſtrength or dexterity. Whenever the provinces were invaded, Diocletian conducted himſelf with that calm dignity which he always affected or poſſeſſed; reſerved his preſence for ſuch occaſions as were worthy of his interpoſition, never expoſed his perſon or reputation to any unneceſſary danger, enſured his ſucceſs by every means that prudence could ſuggeſt, and diſplayed, with oſtentation, the conſequences of his victory. In wars of a more difficult nature, and more doubtful event, he employed the rough valour of Maximian, and that faithful ſoldier was content to aſcribe his own victories to the wiſe counſels and auſpicious influence of his benefactor. But after the adoption of the two Cæſars, the emperors themſelves retiring to a leſs laborious ſcene of action, devolved on their adopted ſons the defence of the Danube and of the Rhine. The vigilant Galerius was never reduced to the neceſſity of vanquiſhing an army of barbarians on the Roman territory [55]. The brave and active Conſtantius delivered Gaul from a very furious inroad of the Alemanni; and his victories

Valour of the Cæſars.

of Langres and Vindoniſſa appear to have been actions of conſiderable danger and merit. As he traverſed the open country with a feeble guard, he was encompaſſed on a ſudden by the ſuperior multitude of the enemy. He retreated with difficulty towards Langres; but, in the general conſternation, the citizens refuſed to open their gates, and the wounded prince was drawn up the wall by the means of a rope. But on the news of his diſtreſs, the Roman troops haſtened from all ſides to his relief, and before the evening he had ſatisfied his honour and revenge by the ſlaughter of ſix thouſand Alemanni [16]. From the monuments of thoſe times, the obſcure traces of ſeveral other victories over the barbarians of Sarmatia and Germany might poſſibly be collected; but the tedious ſearch would not be rewarded either with amuſement or with inſtruction. CHAP. XIII.

Treatment of the barbarians.

The conduct which the emperor Probus had adopted in the diſpoſal of the vanquiſhed, was imitated by Diocletian and his aſſociates. The captive barbarians, exchanging death for ſlavery, were diſtributed among the provincials, and aſſigned to thoſe diſtricts (in Gaul, the territories of Amiens, Beauvais, Cambray, Treves, Langres, and Troyes, are particularly ſpecified [17]) which had been depopulated by the calamities of war. They were uſefully employed as ſhepherds and husbandmen, but were denied the exerciſe of arms, except when it was found expedient to enrol them in the military ſervice. Nor did the emperors refuſe the property of lands, with a leſs

CHAP. XIII.

ſervile tenure, to ſuch of the barbarians as ſolicited the protection of Rome. They granted a ſettlement to ſeveral colonies of the Carpi, the Baſtarnæ, and the Sarmatians; and, by a dangerous indulgence, permitted them in ſome meaſure to retain their national manners and independence [38]. Among the provincials, it was a ſubject of flattering exultation, that the barbarian, ſo lately an object of terror, now cultivated their lands, drove their cattle to the neighbouring fair, and contributed by his labour to the public plenty. They congratulated their maſters on the powerful acceſſion of ſubjects and ſoldiers; but they forgot to obſerve, that multitudes of ſecret enemies, inſolent from favour, or deſperate from oppreſſion, were introduced into the heart of the empire [39].

Wars of Africa and Egypt.

While the Cæſars exerciſed their valour on the banks of the Rhine and Danube, the preſence of the emperors was required on the ſouthern confines of the Roman world. From the Nile to mount Atlas, Africa was in arms. A confederacy of five Moorish nations iſſued from their deſerts to invade the peaceful provinces [40]. Julian had aſſumed the purple at Carthage [41]. Achilleus at Alexandria, and even the Blemmyes, renewed, or rather continued, their incurſions into the Upper Egypt. Scarcely any circumſtances have been preſerved of the exploits of Maximian, in the weſtern parts of Africa; but it appears by the event, that the progreſs of his arms was rapid and deciſive, that he vanquiſhed the fierceſt barbarians of Mauritania, and that he removed them from the mountains,

CHAP. XIII. A. D. 296. Conduct of Diocletian in Egypt.

whoſe inacceſſible ſtrength had inſpired their inhabitants with a lawleſs confidence, and habituated them to a life of rapine and violence [41]. Diocletian, on his ſide, opened the campaign in Egypt by the ſiege of Alexandria, cut off the aqueducts which conveyed the waters of the Nile into every quarter of that immenſe city [42], and rendering his camp impregnable to the ſallies of the beſieged multitude, he puſhed his reiterated attacks with caution and vigour. After a ſiege of eight months, Alexandria, waſted by the ſword and by fire, implored the clemency of the conqueror; but it experienced the full extent of his ſeverity. Many thouſands of the citizens periſhed in a promiſcuous ſlaughter, and there were few obnoxious perſons in Egypt who eſcaped a ſentence either of death, or at leaſt of exile [43]. The fate of Euſiris and of Coptos was ſtill more melancholy than that of Alexandria; thoſe proud cities, the former diſtinguiſhed by its antiquity, the latter enriched by the paſſage of the Indian trade, were utterly deſtroyed by the arms and by the ſevere order of Diocletian [44]. The character of the Egyptian nation, inſenſible to kindneſs, but extremely ſuſceptible of fear, could alone juſtify this exceſſive rigour. The ſeditions of Alexandria had often affected the tranquillity and ſubſiſtence of Rome itſelf. Since the uſurpation of Firmus, the province of Upper Egypt, inceſſantly relapſing into rebellion, had embraced the alliance of the ſavages of Æthiopia. The number of the Blemmyes, ſcattered between the iſland of Meroe and the Red Sea,

CHAP. XIII.

was very inconſiderable, their diſpoſition was unwarlike, their weapons rude and inoffenſive [46]. Yet in the public diſorders theſe barbarians, whom antiquity, ſhocked with the deformity of their figure, had almoſt excluded from the human ſpecies, preſumed to rank themſelves among the enemies of Rome [47]. Such had been the unworthy allies of the Egyptians; and while the attention of the ſtate was engaged in more ſerious wars, their vexatious inroads might again haraſs the repoſe of the province. With a view of oppoſing to the Blemmyes a ſuitable adverſary, Diocletian perſuaded the Nobatæ, or people of Nubia, to remove from their ancient habitations in the deſerts of Lybia, and reſigned to them an extenſive but unprofitable territory above Syene and the cataracts of the Nile, with the ſtipulation, that they ſhould ever reſpect and guard the frontier of the empire. The treaty long ſubſiſted; and till the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity introduced ſtricter notions of religious worſhip, it was annually ratified by a ſolemn ſacrifice in the iſle of Elephantine, in which the Romans, as well as the barbarians, adored the ſame viſible or inviſible powers of the univerſe [48].

At the ſame time that Diocletian chaſtiſed the paſt crimes of the Egyptians, he provided for their future ſafety and happineſs by many wiſe regulations which were confirmed and enforced under the ſucceeding reigns [49]. One very remarkable edict, which he published, inſtead of being condemned as the effect of jealous tyranny, deſerves to be applauded

applauded as an act of prudence and humanity. He cauſed a diligent inquiry to be made „ for all „ the ancient books which treated of the admira- „ ble art of making gold and ſilver, and without „ pity committed them to the flames; apprehen- „ ſive, as we are aſſured, leſt the opulence of the „ Egyptians ſhould inſpire them with confidence „ to rebel againſt the empire [*]." But if Dioclesian had been convinced of the reality of that valuable art, far from extinguiſhing the memory, he would have converted the operation of it to the benefit of the public revenue. It is much more likely, that his good ſenſe diſcovered to him the folly of ſuch magnificent pretenſions, and that he was deſirous of preſerving the reaſon and fortunes of his ſubjects from the miſchievous purſuit. It may be remarked, that theſe ancient books, ſo liberally aſcribed to Pythagoras, to Solomon, or to Hermes, were the pious frauds of more recent adepts. The Greeks were inattentive either to the uſe or to the abuſe of chymiſtry. In that immenſe regiſter, where Pliny has depoſited the diſcoveries, the arts, and the errors of mankind, there is not the leaſt mention of the tranſmutation of metals; and the perſecution of Diocletian is the firſt authentic event in the hiſtory of alchymy. The conqueſt of Egypt by the Arabs diffuſed that vain ſcience over the globe. Congenial to the avarice of the human heart, it was ſtudied in China as in Europe, with equal eagerneſs, and with equal ſucceſs. The darkneſs of the middle ages enſured a favourable reception to every tale of wonder, and the reviv-

CHAP. XIII.

He ſuppreſſes books of alchymy.

Novelty and progreſs of that art.

CHAP. XIII.

of learning gave new vigour to hope, and ſuggeſted more ſpecious arts of deception. Philoſophy, with the aid of experience, has at length baniſhed the ſtudy of alchymy; and the preſent age, however deſirous of riches, is content to ſeek them by the humbler means of commerce and induſtry [11].

The Perſian war.

The reduction of Egypt was immediately followed by the Perſian war. It was reſerved for the reign of Diocletian to vanquish that powerful nation, and to extort a confeſſion from the ſucceſſors of Artaxerxes, of the ſuperior majeſty of the Roman empire.

Tiridates the Armenian.

We have obſerved under the reign of Valerian, that Armenia was ſubdued by the perfidy and the arms of the Perſians, and that, after the aſſaſſination of Choſroes, his ſon Tiridates, the infant heir of the monarchy, was ſaved by the fidelity of his friends, and educated under the protection of the emperors. Tiridates derived from his exile ſuch advantages as he could never have obtained on the throne of Armenia: the early knowledge of adverſity, of mankind, and of the Roman diſcipline. He ſignalized his youth by deeds of valour, and diſplayed a matchleſs dexterity, as well as ſtrength, in every martial exerciſe, and even in the leſs honourable conteſts of the Olympian games [12]. Thoſe qualities were more nobly exerted in the defence of his benefactor Licinius [13]. That officer, in the ſedition which occaſioned the death of Probus, was expoſed to the moſt imminent danger, and the enraged ſoldiers were forcing

A. D. 282.

their way into his tent, when they were checked by the ſingle arm of the Armenian prince. The gratitude of Tiridates contributed ſoon afterwards to his reſtoration. Licinius was in every ſtation the friend and companion of Galerius, and the merit of Galerius, long before he was raiſed to the dignity of Cæſar, had been known and eſteemed by Diocletian. In the third year of that emperor's reign, Tiridates was inveſted with the kingdom of Armenia. The juſtice of the meaſure was not leſs evident than its expediency. It was time to reſcue from the uſurpation of the Perſian monarch an important territory, which, ſince the reign of Nero, had been always granted under the protection of the empire to a younger branch of the houſe of Arſaces [*].

A. D. 286. His reſtoration to the throne of Armenia.

When Tiridates appeared on the frontiers of Armenia, he was received with an unfeigned tranſport of joy and loyalty. During twenty-ſix years, the country had experienced the real and imaginary hardships of a foreign yoke. The Perſian monarchs adorned their new conqueſt with magnificent buildings; but thoſe monuments had been erected at the expence of the people, and were abhorred as badges of ſlavery. The apprehenſion of a revolt had inſpired the moſt rigorous precautions: oppreſſion had been aggravated by inſult, and the conſciouſneſs of the public hatred had been productive of every meaſure that could render it ſtill more implacable. We have already remarked the intolerant ſpirit of the Magian religion. The ſtatues of the deified kings of Arme-

State of the country.

CHAP. XIII.

nia, and the ſacred images of the ſun and moon, were broke in pieces by the zeal of the conqueror; and the perpetual fire of Ormuzd was kindled and preſerved upon an altar erected on the ſummit of mount Bagavan [15]. It was natural, that a people exaſperated by ſo many injuries, ſhould arm with zeal in the cauſe of their independence, their religion, and their hereditary ſovereign. The torrent bore down every obſtacle, and the Perſian garriſons retreated before its fury. The nobles of Armenia flew to the ſtandard of Tiridates, all alleging their paſt merit, offering their future ſervice, and ſoliciting from the new king thoſe honours and rewards from which they had been excluded with diſdain under the foreign government [16]. The command of the army was beſtowed on Artavaſdes, whoſe father had ſaved the infancy of Tiridates, and whoſe family had been maſſacred for that generous action. The brother of Artavaſdes obtained the government of a province. One of the firſt military dignities was conferred on the ſatrap Otas, a man of ſingular temperance and fortitude, who preſented to the king, his ſiſter [17] and a conſiderable treaſure, both of which, in a ſequeſtered fortreſs, Otas had preſerved from violation. Among the Armenian nobles appeared an ally, whoſe fortunes are too remarkable to paſs unnoticed. His name was Mamgo, his origin was Scythian, and the horde which acknowledged his authority, had encamped a very few years before on the skirts of the Chineſe empire [18], which at that time extended as

Revolt of the people and nobles.

Story of Mamgo.

far as the neighbourhood of Sogdiana [*]. Having incurred the displeasure of his master, Mamgo, with his followers, retired to the banks of the Oxus, and implored the protection of Sapor. The emperor of China claimed the fugitive, and alleged the rights of sovereignty. The Persian monarch pleaded the laws of hospitality, and with some difficulty avoided a war, by the promise that he would banish Mamgo to the uttermost parts of the West; a punishment, as he described it, not less dreadful than death itself. Armenia was chosen for the place of exile, and a large district was assigned to the Scythian horde, on which they might feed their flocks and herds, and remove their encampment from one place to another, according to the different seasons of the year. They were employed to repel the invasion of Tiridates; but their leader, after weighing the obligations and injuries which he had received from the Persian monarch, resolved to abandon his party. The Armenian prince, who was well acquainted with the merit as well as power of Mamgo, treated him with distinguished respect; and by admitting him into his confidence, acquired a brave and faithful servant, who contributed very effectually to his restoration [*].

CHAP. XIII.

For a while, fortune appeared to favour the enterprising valour of Tiridates. He not only expelled the enemies of his family and country from the whole extent of Armenia, but in the prosecution of his revenge he carried his arms, or at least his incursions, into the heart of Assyria. The

The Persians recover Armenia.

CHAP. XIII.

hiſtorian, who has preſerved the name of Tiridates from oblivion, celebrates, with a degree of national enthuſiaſm, his perſonal proweſs; and, in the true ſpirit of eaſtern romance, deſcribes the giants and the elephants that fell beneath his invincible arm. It is from other information that we diſcover the diſtracted ſtate of the Perſian monarchy, to which the king of Armenia was indebted for ſome part of his advantages. The throne was diſputed by the ambition of contending brothers; and Hormuz, after exerting without ſucceſs the ſtrength of his own party, had recourſe to the dangerous aſſiſtance of the barbarians who inhabited the banks of the Caſpian Sea [61]. The civil war was, however, ſoon terminated, either by a victory, or by a reconciliation; and Narſes, who was univerſally acknowledged as king of Perſia, directed his whole force againſt the foreign enemy. The conteſt then became too unequal; nor was the valour of the hero able to withſtand the power of the monarch. Tiridates, a ſecond time expelled from the throne of Armenia, once more took refuge in the court of the emperors. Narſes ſoon re-eſtabliſhed his authority over the revolted province; and loudly complaining of the protection afforded by the Romans to rebels and fugitives, aſpired to the conqueſt of the Eaſt [62].

War between the Perſians and the Romans. A. D. 296.

Neither prudence nor honour could permit the emperors to forſake the cauſe of the Armenian king, and it was reſolved to exert the force of the empire in the Perſian war. Diocletian, with the calm dignity which he conſtantly aſſumed,

fixed his own ſtation in the city of Antioch, from whence he prepared and directed the military operations [63]. The conduct of the legions was intruſted to the intrepid valour of Galerius, who, for that important purpoſe, was removed from the banks of the Danube to thoſe of the Euphrates. The armies ſoon encountered each other in the plains of Meſopotamia, and two battles were fought with various and doubtful ſucceſs: but the third engagement was of a more deciſive nature; and the Roman army received a total overthrow, which is attributed to the rashneſs of Galerius, who, with an inconſiderable body of troops, attacked the innumerable hoſt of the Perſians [64]. But the conſideration of the country that was the ſcene of action, may ſuggeſt another reaſon for his defeat. The ſame ground on which Galerius was vanquished, had been rendered memorable by the death of Craſſus, and the ſlaughter of ten legions. It was a plain of more than ſixty miles, which extended from the hills of Carrhæ to the Euphrates; a ſmooth and barren ſurface of ſandy deſert, without a hillock, without a tree, and without a ſpring of freſh water [65]. The ſteady infantry of the Romans, fainting with heat and thirſt, could neither hope for victory if they preſerved their ranks, nor break their ranks without expoſing themſelves to the moſt imminent danger. In this ſituation they were gradually encompaſſed by the ſuperior numbers, haraſſed by the rapid evolutions, and deſtroyed by the arrows of the barbarian cavalry. The king of Armenia had

CHAP. XIII.

Defeat of Galerius.

CHAP. XIII.

ſignalized his valour in the battle, and acquired perſonal glory by the public misfortune. He was purſued as far as the Euphrates; his horſe was wounded, and it appeared impoſſible for him to eſcape the victorious enemy. In this extremity Tiridates embraced the only refuge which he ſaw before him: he diſmounted and plunged into the ſtream. His armour was heavy, the river very deep, and at thoſe parts at leaſt half a mile in breadth [66]; yet ſuch was his ſtrength and dexterity, that he reached in ſafety the oppoſite bank [67]. With regard to the Roman general, we are ignorant of the circumſtances of his eſcape; but when he returned to Antioch, Diocletian received him, not with the tenderneſs of a friend and colleague, but with the indignation of an offended ſovereign. The haughtieſt of men, clothed in his purple, but humbled by the ſenſe of his fault and misfortune, was obliged to follow the emperor's chariot above a mile on foot, and to exhibit, before the whole court, the ſpectacle of his diſgrace [68].

His reception by Diocletian.

Second campaign of Galerius. A. D. 297.

As ſoon as Diocletian had indulged his private reſentment, and aſſerted the majeſty of ſupreme power, he yielded to the ſubmiſſive entreaties of the Cæſar, and permitted him to retrieve his own honour as well as that of the Roman arms. In the room of the unwarlike troops of Aſia, which had moſt probably ſerved in the firſt expedition, a ſecond army was drawn from the veterans and new levies of the Illyrian frontier, and a conſiderable body of Gothic auxiliaries were taken into the Imperial pay [69]. At the head of a choſen

army of twenty-five thouſand men, Galerius again paſſed the Euphrates; but, inſtead of expoſing his legions in the open plains of Meſopotamia, he advanced through the mountains of Armenia, where he found the inhabitants devoted to his cauſe, and the country as favourable to the operations of infantry, as it was inconvenient for the motions of cavalry [70]. Adverſity had confirmed the Roman diſcipline, while the barbarians, elated by ſucceſs, were become ſo negligent and remiſs, that in the moment when they leaſt expected it, they were ſurpriſed by the active conduct of Galerius, who, attended only by two horſemen, had with his own eyes ſecretly examined the ſtate and poſition of their camp. A ſurprize, eſpecially in the night-time, was for the moſt part fatal to a Perſian army. " Their horſes were tied, and „ generally ſhackled, to prevent their running „ away; and if an alarm happened, a Perſian had „ his houſing to fix, his horſe to bridle, and his „ corslet to put on, before he could mount [71]." On this occaſion, the impetuous attack of Galerius ſpread diſorder and diſmay over the camp of the barbarians. A ſlight reſiſtance was followed by a dreadful carnage, and, in the general confuſion, the wounded monarch (for Narſes commanded his armies in perſon) fled towards the deſerts of Media. His ſumptuous tents, and thoſe of his ſatraps, afforded an immenſe booty to the conqueror; and an incident is mentioned, which proves the ruſtic but martial ignorance of the legions in the elegant ſuperfluities of life. A bag

CHAP. XIII.

His victory.

CHAP. XIII.

of shining leather filled with pearls, fell into the hands of a private ſoldier; he carefully preſerved the bag, but he threw away its contents, judging, that whatever was of no uſe could not poſſibly be of any value [72]. The principal loſs of Narſes was of a much more affecting nature. Several of his wives, his ſiſters, and children, who had attended the army, were made captives in the defeat. But though the character of Galerius had in general very little affinity with that of Alexander, he imitated, after his victory, the amiable behaviour of the Macedonian towards the family of Darius. The wives and children of Narſes were protected from violence and rapine, conveyed to a place of ſafety, and treated with every mark of reſpect and tenderneſs, that was due from a generous enemy, to their age, their ſex, and their royal dignity [73].

and behaviour to his royal captives.

Negociation for peace.

While the Eaſt anxiously expected the deciſion of this great conteſt, the emperor Diocletian, having aſſembled in Syria a ſtrong army of obſervation, diſplayed from a diſtance the reſources of the Roman power, and reſerved himſelf for any future emergency of the war. On the intelligence of the victory, he condeſcended to advance towards the frontier; with a view of moderating, by his preſence and counſels, the pride of Galerius. The interview of the Roman princes at Niſibis was accompanied with every expreſſion of reſpect on one ſide, and of eſteem on the other. It was in that city that they ſoon afterwards gave audience to the ambaſſador of the

Great King". The power, or at leaſt the ſpirit of Narſes, had been broken by his laſt defeat; and he conſidered an immediate peace as the only means that could ſtop the progreſs of the Roman arms. He diſpatched Apharban, a ſervant who poſſeſſed his favour and confidence, with a commiſſion to negociate a treaty, or rather to receive whatever conditions the conqueror ſhould impoſe. Apharban opened the conference by expreſſing his maſter's gratitude for the generous treatment of his family, and by ſoliciting the liberty of thoſe illuſtrious captives. He celebrated the valour of Galerius without degrading the reputation of Narſes, and thought it no diſhonour to confeſs the ſuperiority of the victorious Cæſar, over a monarch who had ſurpaſſed in glory all the princes of his race. Notwithſtanding the juſtice of the Perſian cauſe, he was empowered to ſubmit the preſent differences to the deciſion of the emperors themſelves; convinced as he was, that, in the midſt of proſperity, they would not be unmindful of the viciſſitudes of fortune. Apharban concluded his diſcourſe in the ſtyle of eaſtern allegory, by obſerving that the Roman and Perſian monarchies were the two eyes of the world, which would remain imperfect and mutilated if either of them ſhould be put out.

CHAP. XIII.

Speech of the Perſian ambaſſador.

" It well becomes the Perſians, ,, replied Galerius, with a tranſport of fury, which ſeemed to convulſe his whole frame, " it well becomes the ,, Perſians to expatiate on the viciſſitudes of for- ,, tune, and calmly to read us lectures on the

Anſwer of Galerius.

CHAP. XIII.

„ virtues of moderation. Let them remember „ their own *moderation* towards the unhappy Va„ lerian. They vanquished him by fraud, they „ treated him with indignity. They detained „ him till the laſt moment of his life in shame„ ful captivity, and after his death they expoſed „ his body to perpetual ignominy." Softening, however, his tone, Galerius inſinuated to the ambaſſador, that it had never been the practice of the Romans to trample on a proſtrate enemy; and that, on this occaſion, they ſhould conſult their own dignity, rather than the Perſian merit. He diſmiſſed Apharban with a hope, that Narſes would ſoon be informed on what conditions he might obtain, from the clemency of the emperors, a laſting peace, and the reſtoration of his wives and children. In this conference we may diſcover the fierce paſſions of Galerius, as well as his deference to the ſuperior wiſdom and authority of Diocletian. The ambition of the former graſped at the conqueſt of the Eaſt, and had propoſed to reduce Perſia into the ſtate of a province. The prudence of the latter, who adhered to the moderate policy of Auguſtus and the Antonines, embraced the favourable opportunity of terminating a ſucceſsful war by an honourable and advantageous peace [77].

Moderation of Diocletian.

Concluſion

In purſuance of their promiſe, the emperors ſoon afterwards appointed Sicorius Probus, one of their ſecretaries, to acquaint the Perſian court with their final reſolution. As the miniſter of peace, he was received with every mark of po-

liteneſs and friendship; but, under the pretence of allowing him the neceſſary repoſe after ſo long a journey, the audience of Probus was deferred from day to day; and he attended the slow motions of the king, till at length he was admitted to his preſence, near the river Aſprudus in Media. The ſecret motive of Narſes in this delay, had been to collect ſuch a military force, as might enable him, though ſincerely deſirous of peace, to negociate with the greater weight and dignity. Three perſons only aſſiſted at this important conference, the miniſter Apharban, the præfect of the guards, and an officer who had commanded on the Armenian frontier [74]. The firſt condition propoſed by the ambaſſador, is not at preſent of a very intelligible nature; that the city of Niſibis might be eſtabliſhed for the place of mutual exchange, or, as we ſhould formerly have termed it, for the ſtaple of trade, between the two empires. There is no difficulty in conceiving the intention of the Roman princes to improve their revenue by ſome reſtraints upon commerce; but as Niſibis was ſituated within their own dominions, and as they were maſters both of the imports and exports, it ſhould ſeem, that ſuch reſtraints were the objects of an internal law, rather than of a foreign treaty. To render them more effectual, ſome ſtipulations were probably required on the ſide of the king of Perſia, which appeared ſo very repugnant either to his intereſt or to his dignity, that Narſes could not be perſuaded to ſubſcribe them. As this was the only

CHAP. XIII.

CHAP. XIII.

article to which he refuſed his conſent, it was no longer inſiſted on; and the emperors either ſuffered the trade to flow in its natural channels, or contented themſelves with ſuch reſtrictions, as it depended on their own authority to eſtabliſh.

and articles of the treaty.

As ſoon as this difficulty was removed, a ſolemn peace was concluded and ratified between the two nations. The conditions of a treaty ſo glorious to the empire, and ſo neceſſary to Perſia, may deſerve a more peculiar attention, as the hiſtory of Rome preſents very few tranſactions of a ſimilar nature; moſt of her wars having either been terminated by abſolute conqueſt, or waged againſt barbarians ignorant of the uſe of letters.

The Aboras fixed as the limits between the empires.

I. The Aboras, or, as it is called by Xenophon, the Araxes, was fixed as the boundary between the two monarchies [77]. That river, which roſe near the Tigris, was increaſed a few miles below Niſibis, by the little ſtream of the Mygdonius, paſſed under the walls of Singara, and fell into the Euphrates at Circeſium, a frontier town, which, by the care of Diocletian, was very ſtrongly fortified [78]. Meſopotamia, the object of ſo many wars, was ceded to the empire; and the Perſians, by this treaty, renounced all pretenſions to that great province.

Ceſſion of five provinces beyond the Tigris.

II. They relinquiſhed to the Romans five provinces beyond the Tigris [79]. Their ſituation formed a very uſeful barrier, and their natural ſtrength was ſoon improved by art and military ſkill. Four of theſe, to the north of the river, were diſtricts of obſcure

fame and inconſiderable extent; Intiline, Zabdicene, Arzanene, and Moxoene: but on the eaſt of the Tigris, the empire acquired the large and mountainous territory of Carduene, the ancient ſeat of the Carduchians, who preſerved for many ages their manly freedom in the heart of the deſpotic monarchies of Aſia. The ten thouſand Greeks traverſed their country, after a painful march, or rather engagement, of ſeven days; and it is confeſſed by their leader, in his incomparable relation of the retreat, that they ſuffered more from the arrows of the Carduchians, than from the power of the Great King [80]. Their poſterity, the Curds, with very little alteration either of name or manners, acknowledged the nominal ſovereignty of the Turkish ſultan. III. It is almoſt needleſs to obſerve, that Tiridates, the faithful ally of Rome, was reſtored to the throne of his fathers, and that the rights of the Imperial ſupremacy were fully aſſerted and ſecured. The limits of Armenia were extended as far as the fortreſs of Sintha in Media, and this increaſe of dominion was not ſo much an act of liberality as of juſtice. Of the provinces already mentioned beyond the Tigris, the four firſt had been diſmembered by the Parthians from the crown of Armenia [81]; and when the Romans acquired the poſſeſſion of them, they ſtipulated, at the expence of the uſurpers, an ample compenſation, which inveſted their ally with the extenſive and fertile country of Atropatene. Its principal city, in the ſame ſituation perhaps as the

CHAP. XIII.

Armenia.

CHAP. XIII.

modern Tauris, was frequently honoured with the reſidence of Tiridates; and as it ſometimes bore the name of Ecbatana, he imitated, in the buildings and fortifications, the ſplendid capital of the Medes [11]. IV. The country of Iberia was barren, its inhabitants rude and ſavage. But they were accuſtomed to the uſe of arms, and they ſeparated from the empire barbarians much fiercer and more formidable than themſelves. The narrow defiles of Mount Caucaſus were in their hands, and it was in their choice, either to admit or to exclude the wandering tribes of Sarmatia, whenever a rapacious ſpirit urged them to penetrate into the richer climates of the South [12]. The nomination of the kings of Iberia, which was reſigned by the Perſian monarch to the emperors, contributed to the ſtrength and ſecurity of the Roman power in Aſia [13]. The Eaſt enjoyed a profound tranquillity during forty years, and the treaty between the rival monarchies was ſtrictly obſerved till the death of Tiridates; when a new generation, animated with different views and different paſſions, ſucceeded to the government of the world; and the grandſon of Narſes undertook a long and memorable war againſt the princes of the houſe of Conſtantine.

Iberia.

Triumph of Diocletian and Maximian. A. D. 303. Nov. 20.

The arduous work of reſcuing the diſtreſſed empire from tyrants and barbarians had now been completely atchieved by a ſucceſſion of Illyrian peaſants. As ſoon as Diocletian entered into the twentieth year of his reign, he celebrated that memorable æra, as well as the ſucceſs of his arms

arms, by the pomp of a Roman triumph [15]. Maximian, the equal partner of his power, was his only companion in the glory of that day. The two Cæſars had fought and conquered, but the merit of their exploits was aſcribed, according to the rigour of ancient maxims, to the auſpicious influence of their fathers and emperors [16]. The triumph of Diocletian and Maximian was leſs magnificent perhaps than thoſe of Aurelian and Probus, but it was dignified by ſeveral circumſtances of ſuperior fame and good fortune. Africa and Britain, the Rhine, the Danube, and the Nile, furniſhed their reſpective trophies; but the moſt diſtinguiſhed ornament was of a more ſingular nature, a Perſian victory followed by an important conqueſt. The repreſentations of rivers, mountains, and provinces, were carried before the Imperial car. The images of the captive wives, the ſiſters, and the children of the Great King, afforded a new and grateful ſpectacle to the vanity of the people [17]. In the eyes of poſterity this triumph is remarkable, by a diſtinction of a leſs honourable kind. It was the laſt that Rome ever beheld. Soon after this period, the emperors ceaſed to vanquish, and Rome ceaſed to be the capital of the empire.

CHAP. XIII.

Long abſence of the emperors from Rome.

The ſpot on which Rome was founded, had been conſecrated by ancient ceremonies and imaginary miracles. The preſence of ſome god, or the memory of ſome hero, ſeemed to animate every part of the city, and the empire of the world had been promiſed to the Capitol [18]. The

CHAP. XIII.

native Romans felt and confeſſed the power of this agreeable illuſion. It was derived from their anceſtors, had grown up with their earlieſt habits of life, and was protected, in ſome meaſure, by the opinion of political utility. The form and the ſeat of government were intimately blended together, nor was it eſteemed poſſible to tranſport the one without deſtroying the other [n]. But the ſovereignty of the capital was gradually annihilated in the extent of conqueſt; the provinces roſe to the ſame level, and the vanquiſhed nations acquired the name and privileges, without imbibing the partial affections, of Romans. During a long period, however, the remains of the ancient conſtitution, and the influence of cuſtom, preſerved the dignity of Rome. The emperors, though perhaps of African or Illyrian extraction, reſpected their adopted country, as the ſeat of their power, and the centre of their extenſive dominions. The emergencies of war very frequently required their preſence on the frontiers; but Diocletian and Maximian were the firſt Roman princes who fixed, in time of peace, their ordinary reſidence in the provinces; and their conduct, however it might be ſuggeſted by private motives, was juſtified by very ſpecious conſiderations of policy.

Their reſidence at Milan.

The court of the emperor of the Weſt was, for the moſt part, eſtabliſhed at Milan, whoſe ſituation, at the foot of the Alps, appeared far more convenient than that of Rome, for the important purpoſe of watching the motions of the barbarians of Germany. Milan ſoon aſſumed

the ſplendour of an Imperial city. The houſes are deſcribed as numerous and well-built; the manners of the people as polished and liberal. A circus, a theatre, a mint, a palace, baths, which bore the name of their founder Maximian; porticoes adorned with ſtatues, and a double circumference of walls, contributed to the beauty of the new capital; nor did it ſeem oppreſſed even by the proximity of Rome [90]. To rival the majeſty of Rome was the ambition likewiſe of Diocletian, who employed his leiſure, and the wealth of the Eaſt, in the embellishment of Nicomedia, a city placed on the verge of Europe and Aſia, almoſt at an equal diſtance between the Danube and the Euphrates. By the taſte of the monarch, and at the expence of the people, Nicomedia acquired, in the ſpace of a few years, a degree of magnificence which might appear to have required the labour of ages, and became inferior only to Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, in extent or populouſneſs [91]. The life of Diocletian and Maximian was a life of action, and a conſiderable portion of it was ſpent in camps, or in their long and frequent marches; but whenever the public buſineſs allowed them any relaxation, they ſeem to have retired with pleaſure to their favourite reſidences of Nicomedia and Milan. Till Diocletian, in the twentieth year of his reign, celebrated his Roman triumph, it is extremely doubtful whether he ever viſited the ancient capital of the empire. Even on that memorable occaſion his ſtay did not exceed two months. Diſguſted with the

CHAP. XIII.

and Nicomedia.

CHAP. XIII.

licentious familiarity of the people, he quitted Rome with precipitation thirteen days before it was expected that he should have appeared in the ſenate, inveſted with the enſigns of the conſular dignity [92].

Debaſement of Rome and of the ſenate.

The diſlike expreſſed by Diocletian towards Rome and Roman freedom, was not the effect of momentary caprice, but the reſult of the moſt artful policy. That crafty prince had framed a new ſyſtem of Imperial government, which was afterwards completed by the family of Conſtantine; and, as the image of the old conſtitution was religiously preſerved in the ſenate, he reſolved to deprive that order of its ſmall remains of power and conſideration. We may recollect, about eight years before the elevation of Diocletian, the tranſient greatneſs, and the ambitious hopes, of the Roman ſenate. As long as that enthuſiaſm prevailed, many of the nobles imprudently diſplayed their zeal in the cauſe of freedom; and after the ſucceſſors of Probus had withdrawn their countenance from the republican party, the ſenators were unable to diſguiſe their impotent reſentment. As the ſovereign of Italy, Maximian was intruſted with the care of extinguishing this troubleſome, rather than dangerous, ſpirit, and the task was perfectly ſuited to his cruel temper. The moſt illuſtrious members of the ſenate, whom Diocletian always affected to eſteem, were involved, by his colleague, in the accuſation of imaginary plots; and the poſſeſſion of an elegant villa, or a well cultivated

eſtate, was interpreted as a convincing evidence of guilt [11]. The camp of the Prætorians, which had ſo long oppreſſed, began to protect, the majeſty of Rome; and as thoſe haughty troops were conſcious of the decline of their power, they were naturally diſpoſed to unite their ſtrength with the authority of the ſenate. By the prudent meaſures of Diocletian, the numbers of the Prætorians were inſenſibly reduced, their privileges abolished [12], and their place ſupplied by two faithful legions of Illyricum, who, under the new titles of Jovians and Herculians, were appointed to perform the ſervice of the Imperial guards [13]. But the moſt fatal though ſecret wound, which the ſenate received from the hands of Diocletian and Maximian, was inflicted by the inevitable operation of their abſence. As long as the emperors reſided at Rome, that aſſembly might be oppreſſed, but it could ſcarcely be neglected. The ſucceſſors of Auguſtus exerciſed the power of dictating whatever laws their wiſdom or caprice might ſuggeſt; but thoſe laws were ratified by the ſanction of the ſenate. The model of ancient freedom was preſerved in its deliberations and decrees; and wiſe princes, who reſpected the prejudices of the Roman people, were in ſome meaſure obliged to aſſume the language and behaviour ſuitable to the general and firſt magiſtrate of the republic. In the armies and in the provinces, they diſplayed the dignity of monarchs; and when they fixed their reſidence at a diſtance from the capital, they for ever

CHAP. XIII.

New bodies of guards, Jovians and Herculians.

CHAP. XIII.

laid aſide the diſſimulation which Auguſtus had recommended to his ſucceſſors. In the exerciſe of the legiſlative as well as the executive power, the ſovereign adviſed with his miniſters, inſtead of conſulting the great council of the nation. The name of the ſenate was mentioned with honour till the laſt period of the empire; the vanity of its members was ſtill flattered with honorary diſtinctions [96]; but the aſſembly which had ſo long been the ſource, and ſo long the inſtrument of power, was reſpectfully ſuffered to ſink into oblivion. The ſenate of Rome, loſing all connection with the Imperial court and the actual conſtitution, was left a venerable but uſeleſs monument of antiquity on the Capitoline hill.

Civil magiſtracies laid aſide.

When the Roman princes had loſt ſight of the ſenate and of their ancient capital, they eaſily forgot the origin and nature of their legal power. The civil offices of conſul, of proconſul, of cenſor, and of tribune, by the union of which it had been formed, betrayed to the people its republican extraction. Thoſe modeſt titles were laid aſide [97]; and if they ſtill diſtinguiſhed their high ſtation by the appellation of Emperor, or IMPERATOR, that word was underſtood in a new and more dignified ſenſe, and no longer denoted the general of the Roman armies, but the ſovereign of the Roman world. The name of Emperor, which was at firſt of a military nature, was aſſociated with another of a more ſervile kind. The epithet of DOMINUS, or Lord, in its primitive ſignification, was expreſſive, not of the authority

Imperial dignity and titles.

of a prince over his ſubjects, or of a commander over his ſoldiers, but of the deſpotic power of a maſter over his domeſtic ſlaves [11]. Viewing it in that odious light, it had been rejected with abhorrence by the firſt Cæſars. Their reſiſtance inſenſibly became more feeble, and the name leſs odious; till at length the ſtyle of *our lord and Emperor*, was not only beſtowed by flattery, but was regularly admitted into the laws and public monuments. Such lofty epithets were ſufficient to elate and ſatisfy the moſt exceſſive vanity; and if the ſucceſſors of Diocletian ſtill declined the title of King, it ſeems to have been the effect not ſo much of their moderation as of their delicacy. Wherever the Latin tongue was in uſe (and it was the language of government throughout the empire), the Imperial title, as it was peculiar to themſelves, conveyed a more reſpectable idea than the name of King, which they muſt have ſhared with an hundred barbarian chieftains; or which, at the beſt, they could derive only from Romulus or from Tarquin. But the ſentiments of the Eaſt were very different from thoſe of the Weſt. From the earlieſt period of hiſtory, the ſovereigns of Aſia had been celebrated in the Greek language by the title of BASILEUS, or King; and ſince it was conſidered as the firſt diſtinction among men, it was ſoon employed by the ſervile provincials of the Eaſt, in their humble addreſſes to the Roman throne [12]. Even the attributes, or at leaſt the titles of the DIVINITY, were uſurped by Diocletian and Maximian, who tranſmitted them

CHAP. XIII.

CHAP. XIII.

to a ſucceſſion of Chriſtian emperors [100]. Such extravagant compliments, however, ſoon loſe their impiety by loſing their meaning; and when the ear is once accuſtomed to the ſound, they are heard with indifference as vague though exceſſive profeſſions of reſpect.

Diocletian aſſumes the diadem, and introduces the Perſian ceremonial.

From the time of Auguſtus to that of Diocletian, the Roman princes converſing in a familiar manner among their fellow-citizens, were ſaluted only with the ſame reſpect that was uſually paid to ſenators and magiſtrates. Their principal diſtinction was the Imperial or military robe of purple; whilſt the ſenatorial garment was marked by a broad, and the equeſtrian by a narrow, band or ſtripe of the ſame honourable colour. The pride, or rather the policy, of Diocletian, engaged that artful prince to introduce the ſtately magnificence of the court of Perſia [101]. He ventured to aſſume the diadem, an ornament deteſted by the Romans as the odious enſign of royalty, and the uſe of which had been conſidered as the moſt deſperate act of the madneſs of Caligula. It was no more than a broad white fillet ſet with pearls, which encircled the emperors head. The ſumptuous robes of Diocletian and his ſucceſſors were of ſilk and gold; and it is remarked with indignation, that even their ſhoes were ſtudded with the moſt precious gems. The acceſs to their ſacred perſon was every day rendered more difficult, by the inſtitution of new forms and ceremonies. The avenues of the palace were ſtrictly guarded by the various *ſchools*, as they began to be called, of domeſtic officers,

The interior apartments were intruſted to the jealous vigilance of the eunuchs; the increaſe of whoſe numbers and influence was the moſt infallible ſymptom of the progreſs of deſpotiſm. When a ſubject was at length admitted to the Imperial preſence, he was obliged, whatever might be his rank, to fall proſtrate on the ground, and to adore, according to the eaſtern faſhion, the divinity of his lord and maſter [102]. Diocletian was a man of ſenſe, who, in the courſe of private as well as public life, had formed a juſt eſtimate both of himſelf and of mankind: nor is it eaſy to conceive, that in ſubſtituting the manners of Perſia to thoſe of Rome, he was ſeriously actuated by ſo mean a principle as that of vanity. He flattered himſelf, that an oſtentation of ſplendour and luxury would ſubdue the imagination of the multitude; that the monarch would be leſs expoſed to the rude licence of the people and the ſoldiers, as his perſon was ſecluded from the public view; and that habits of ſubmiſſion would inſenſibly be productive of ſentiments of veneration. Like the modeſty affected by Auguſtus, the ſtate maintained by Diocletian was a theatrical repreſentation; but it muſt be confeſſed, that of the two comedies, the former was of a much more liberal and manly character than the latter. It was the aim of the one to diſguiſe, and the object of the other to diſplay, the unbounded power which the emperors poſſeſſed over the Roman world.

CHAP. XIII.

CHAP. XIII. New form of administration, two Augusti, and two Cæsars.

Ostentation was the first principle of the new system instituted by Diocletian. The second was division. He divided the empire, the provinces, and every branch of the civil as well as military administration. He multiplied the wheels of the machine of government, and rendered its operations less rapid but more secure. Whatever advantages, and whatever defects might attend these innovations, they must be ascribed in a very great degree to the first inventor; but as the new frame of policy was gradually improved and completed by succeeding princes, it will be more satisfactory to delay the consideration of it till the season of its full maturity and perfection [10]. Reserving, therefore, for the reign of Constantine a more exact picture of the new empire, we shall content ourselves with describing the principal and decisive outline, as it was traced by the hand of Diocletian. He had associated three colleagues in the exercise of the supreme power; and as he was convinced that the abilities of a single man were inadequate to the public defence, he considered the joint administration of four princes not as a temporary expedient, but as a fundamental law of the constitution. It was his intention, that the two elder princes should be distinguished by the use of the diadem, and the title of *Augusti*: that, as affection or esteem might direct their choice, they should regularly call to their assistance two subordinate colleagues; and that the *Cæsars*, rising in their turn to the first rank, should supply an uninterrupted succession of emperors.

The empire was divided into four parts. The Eaſt and Italy were the moſt honourable, the Danube and the Rhine the moſt laborious ſtations. The former claimed the preſence of the *Auguſti*, the latter were intruſted to the adminiſtration of the *Cæſars*. The ſtrength of the legions was in the hands of the four partners of ſovereignty, and the deſpair of ſucceſſively vanquiſhing four formidable rivals, might intimidate the ambition of an aſpiring general. In their civil government, the emperors were ſuppoſed to exerciſe the undivided power of the monarch, and their edicts, inſcribed with their joint names, were received in all the provinces, as promulgated by their mutual councils and authority. Notwithſtanding theſe precautions, the political union of the Roman world was gradually diſſolved, and a principle of diviſion was introduced, which, in the courſe of a few years, occaſioned the perpetual ſeparation of the eaſtern and weſtern empires.

Increaſe of taxes.

The ſyſtem of Diocletian was accompanied with another very material diſadvantage, which cannot even at preſent be totally overlooked; a more expenſive eſtabliſhment, and conſequently an increaſe of taxes, and the oppreſſion of the people. Inſtead of a modeſt family of ſlaves and freedmen, ſuch as had contented the ſimple greatneſs of Auguſtus and Trajan, three or four magnificent courts were eſtabliſhed in the various parts of the empire, and as many Roman *kings* contended with each other and with the Perſian monarch for the vain ſuperiority of pomp and luxury. The

CHAP. XIII.

number of miniſters, of magiſtrates, of officers, and of ſervants, who filled the different departments of the ſtate, was multiplied beyond the example of former times; and (if we may borrow the warm expreſſion of a contemporary), „ when „ the proportion of thoſe who received, exceeded „ the proportion of thoſe who contributed, the „ provinces were oppreſſed by the weight of tri- „ butes [104]." From this period to the extinction of the empire, it would be eaſy to deduce an uninterrupted ſeries of clamours and complaints. According to his religion and ſituation, each writer chuſes either Diocletian, or Conſtantine, or Valens, or Theodoſius, for the object of his invectives; but they unanimously agree in repreſenting the burden of the public impoſitions, and particularly the land-tax and capitation, as the intolerable and increaſing grievance of their own times. From ſuch a concurrence, an impartial hiſtorian, who is obliged to extract truth from ſatire, as well as from panegyric, will be inclined to divide the blame among the princes whom they accuſe, and to aſcribe their exactions much leſs to their perſonal vices, than to the uniform ſyſtem of their adminiſtration. The emperor Diocletian was indeed the author of that ſyſtem; but during his reign, the growing evil was confined within the bounds of modeſty and diſcretion, and he deſerves the reproach of eſtabliſhing pernicious precedents, rather than of exerciſing actual oppreſſion [105]. It may be added, that his revenues were managed with prudent œconomy; and that

after all the current expences were diſcharged, there ſtill remained in the Imperial treaſury an ample proviſion either for judicious liberality or for any emergency of the ſtate.

Abdication of Diocletian and Maximian.

It was in the twenty-firſt year of his reign that Diocletian executed his memorable reſolution of abdicating the empire; an action more naturally to have been expected from the elder or the younger Antoninus, than from a prince who had never practiſed the leſſons of philoſophy either in the attainment or in the uſe of ſupreme power. Diocletian acquired the glory of giving to the world the firſt example of a reſignation [106], which has not been very frequently imitated by ſucceeding monarchs. The parallel of Charles the Fifth, however, will naturally offer itſelf to our mind, not only ſince the eloquence of a modern hiſtorian has rendered that name ſo familiar to an English reader, but from the very ſtriking reſemblance between the characters of the two emperors, whoſe political abilities were ſuperior to their military genius, and whoſe ſpecious virtues were much leſs the effect of nature than of art. The abdication of Charles appears to have been haſtened by the viciſſitude of fortune; and the diſappointment of his favourite ſchemes urged him to relinquish a power which he found inadequate to his ambition. But the reign of Diocletian had flowed with a tide of uninterrupted ſucceſs; nor was it till after he had vanquiſhed all his enemies, and accomplished all his deſigns, that he ſeems to have entertained any ſerious thoughts of reſign-

Reſemblance to Charles the Fifth.

CHAP. XIII.

ing the empire. Neither Charles nor Diocletian were arrived at a very advanced period of life; ſince the one was only fifty-five, and the other was no more than fifty-nine years of age; but the active life of thoſe princes, their wars and journies, the cares of royalty, and their application to buſineſs, had already impaired their conſtitution, and brought on the infirmities of a premature old age [107].

A. D. 304. Long illneſs of Diocletian.

Notwithſtanding the ſeverity of a very cold and rainy winter, Diocletian left Italy ſoon after the ceremony of his triumph, and began his progreſs towards the Eaſt round the circuit of the Illyrian provinces. From the inclemency of the weather, and the fatigue of the journey, he ſoon contracted a ſlow illneſs; and though he made eaſy marches, and was generally carried in a cloſe litter, his diſorder, before he arrived at Nicomedia, about the end of the ſummer, was become very ſerious and alarming. During the whole winter he was confined to his palace; his danger inſpired a general and unaffected concern; but the people could only judge of the various alterations of his health, from the joy or conſternation which they diſcovered in the countenances and behaviour of his attendants. The rumour of his death was for ſome time univerſally believed, and it was ſuppoſed to be concealed, with a view to prevent the troubles that might have happened during the abſence of the Cæſar Galerius. At length, however, on the firſt of March, Diocletian once more appeared in public, but ſo

pale and emaciated, that he could ſcarcely have been recogniſed by thoſe to whom his perſon was the moſt familiar. It was time to put an end to the painful ſtruggle, which he had ſuſtained during more than a year, between the care of his health and that of his dignity. The former required indulgence and relaxation, the latter compelled him to direct, from the bed of ſickneſs, the adminiſtration of a great empire. He reſolved to paſs the remainder of his days in honourable repoſe, to place his glory beyond the reach of fortune, and to relinquish the theatre of the world to his younger and more active aſſociates [108].

CHAP. XIII. His prudence.

The ceremony of his abdication was performed in a ſpacious plain, about three miles from Nicomedia. The emperor aſcended a lofty throne, and in a ſpeech, full of reaſon and dignity, declared his intention, both to the people and to the ſoldiers who were aſſembled on this extraordinary occaſion. As ſoon as he had diveſted himſelf of the purple, he withdrew from the gazing multitude; and traverſing the city in a covered chariot, proceeded, without delay, to the favourite retirement which he had choſen in his native country of Dalmatia. On the ſame day, which was the firſt of May [109], Maximian, as it had been previously concerted, made his reſignation of the Imperial dignity at Milan. Even in the ſplendour of the Roman triumph, Diocletian had meditated his deſign of abdicating the government. As he wished to ſecure the obedience of Maximian, he exacted from him, either a general aſſurance that

A. D. 305. May 1.

Compliance of Maximian.

CHAP. XIII.

he would ſubmit his actions to the authority of his benefactor, or a particular promiſe that he would deſcend from the throne, whenever he ſhould receive the advice and the example. His engagement, though it was confirmed by the ſolemnity of an oath before the altar of the Capitoline Jupiter [110], would have proved a feeble reſtraint on the fierce temper of Maximian, whoſe paſſion was the love of power, and who neither deſired preſent tranquillity nor future reputation. But he yielded, however reluctantly, to the aſcendant which his wiſer colleague had acquired over him, and retired, immediately after his abdication, to a villa in Lucania, where it was almoſt impoſſible that ſuch an impatient ſpirit could find any laſting tranquillity.

Retirement of Diocletian at Salona.

Diocletian, who, from a ſervile origin, had raiſed himſelf to the throne, paſſed the nine laſt years of his life in a private condition. Reaſon had dictated, and content ſeems to have accompanied, his retreat, in which he enjoyed for a long time the reſpect of thoſe princes to whom he had reſigned the poſſeſſion of the world [111]. It is ſeldom that minds, long exerciſed in buſineſs, have formed any habits of converſing with themſelves, and in the loſs of power they principally regret the want of occupation. The amuſements of letters and of devotion, which afford ſo many reſources in ſolitude, were incapable of fixing the attention of Diocletian; but he had preſerved, or at leaſt he ſoon recovered, a taſte for the moſt innocent as well as natural pleaſures, and his leiſure

leiſure hours were ſufficiently employed in building, planting, and gardening. His anſwer to Maximian is deſervedly celebrated. He was ſolicited by that reſtleſs old man to reaſſume the reins of government, and the Imperial purple. He rejected the temptation with a ſmile of pity, calmly obſerving, that if he could ſhew Maximian the cabbages which he had planted with his own hands at Salona, he ſhould no longer be urged to relinquiſh the enjoyment of happineſs for the purſuit of power [112]. In his converſations with his friends, he frequently acknowledged, that of all arts, the moſt difficult was the art of reigning; and he expreſſed himſelf on that favourite topic with a degree of warmth which could be the reſult only of experience. „ How often, was „ he accuſtomed to ſay, is it the intereſt of four „ or five miniſters to combine together to deceive „ their ſovereign! Secluded from mankind by his „ exalted dignity, the truth is concealed from his „ knowledge; he can ſee only with their eyes, „ he hears nothing but their miſrepreſentations. „ He confers the moſt important offices upon vice „ and weakneſs, and diſgraces the moſt virtuous „ and deſerving among his ſubjects. By ſuch in- „ famous arts, added Diocletian, the beſt and „ wiſeſt princes are ſold to the venal corruption „ of their courtiers [113]." A juſt eſtimate of greatneſs, and the aſſurance of immortal fame, improve our relish for the pleaſures of retirement; but the Roman emperor had filled too important a character in the world, to enjoy without allay the

CHAP. XIII.

His philoſophy.

CHAP. XIII.

comforts and ſecurity of a private condition. It was impoſſible that he could remain ignorant of the troubles which afflicted the empire after his abdication. It was impoſſible that he could be indifferent to their conſequences. Fear, ſorrow, and diſcontent, ſometimes purſued him into the ſolitude of Salona. His tenderneſs, or at leaſt his pride, was deeply wounded by the misfortunes of his wife and daughter; and the laſt moments of Diocletian were embittered by ſome affronts, which Licinius and Conſtantine might have ſpared the father of ſo many emperors, and the firſt author of their own fortune. A report, though of a very doubtful nature, has reached our times, that he prudently withdrew himſelf from their power by a voluntary death [114].

and death. A. D. 313.

Deſcription of Salona and the adjacent country.

Before we diſmiſs the conſideration of the life and character of Diocletian, we may, for a moment, direct our view to the place of his retirement, Salona, a principal city of his native province of Dalmatia, was near two hundred Roman miles (according to the meaſurement of the public highways) from Aquileia and the confines of Italy, and about two hundred and ſeventy from Sirmium, the uſual reſidence of the emperors whenever they viſited the Illyrian frontier [115]. A miſerable village ſtill preſerves the name of Salona; but ſo late as the ſixteenth century, the remains of a theatre, and a confuſed proſpect of broken arches and marble columns, continued to atteſt its ancient ſplendour [116]. About ſix or ſeven miles from the city, Diocletian conſtructed a magnificent palace,

and we may infer, from the greatneſs of the work, how long he had meditated his deſign of abdicating the empire. The choice of a ſpot which united all that could contribute either to health or to luxury, did not require the partiality of a native. „ The ſoil was dry and fertile, the air is „ pure and wholeſome, and though extremely „ hot during the ſummer months, this country „ ſeldom feels thoſe ſultry and noxious winds, „ to which the coaſts of Iſtria and ſome parts of „ Italy are expoſed. The views from the palace „ are no leſs beautiful than the ſoil and climate „ were inviting. Towards the weſt lies the fertile „ ſhore that ſtretches along the Hadriatic, in „ which a number of ſmall islands are ſcattered „ in ſuch a manner, as to give this part of the „ ſea the appearance of a great lake. On the north „ ſide lies the bay, which led to the ancient city „ of Salona; and the country beyond it, appear- „ ing in ſight, forms a proper contraſt to that „ more extenſive proſpect of water, which the „ Hadriatic preſents both to the ſouth and to the „ eaſt. Towards the north, the view is termina- „ ted by high and irregular mountains, ſituated „ at a proper diſtance, and, in many places, co- „ vered with villages, woods, and vineyards [117]." CHAP. XIII.

Though Conſtantine, from a very obvious prejudice, affects to mention the palace of Diocletian with contempt [118], yet one of their ſucceſſors, who could only ſee it in a neglected and mutilated ſtate, celebrates its magnificence in terms of the higheſt admiration [119]. It covered an extent of Diocletian's palace.

CHAP. XIII.

of ground conſiſting of between nine and ten English acres. The form was quadrangular, flanked with ſixteen towers. Two of the ſides were near ſix hundred, and the other two near ſeven hundred feet in length. The whole was conſtructed of a beautiful free-ſtone, extracted from the neighbouring quarries of Trau or Tragutium, and very little inferior to marble itſelf. Four ſtreets, interſecting each other at right angles, divided the ſeveral parts of this great edifice, and the approach to the principal apartment was from a very ſtately entrance, which is ſtill denominated the Golden Gate. The approach was terminated by a *periſtilium* of granite columns, on one ſide of which we diſcover the ſquare temple of Æſculapius, on the other the octagon temple of Jupiter. The latter of thoſe deities Diocletian revered as the patron of his fortunes, the former as the protector of his health. By comparing the preſent remains with the precepts of Vitruvius, the ſeveral parts of the building, the baths, bedchamber, the *atrium*, the *baſilica*, and the Cyzicene, Corinthian, and Egyptian halls, have been deſcribed with ſome degree of preciſion, or at leaſt of probability. Their forms were various, their proportions juſt, but they were all attended with two imperfections, very repugnant to our modern notions of taſte and conveniency. Theſe ſtately rooms had neither windows nor chimnies. They were lighted from the top (for the building ſeems to have conſiſted of no more than one ſtory), and they received their heat by the help of pipes

CHAP. XIII.

that were conveyed along the walls. The range of principal apartments was protected towards the ſouth-weſt, by a portico of five hundred and ſeventeen feet long, which muſt have formed a very noble and delightful walk, when the beauties of painting and ſculpture were added to thoſe of the proſpect.

Had this magnificent edifice remained in a ſolitary country, it would have been expoſed to the ravages of time; but it might, perhaps, have eſcaped the rapacious induſtry of man. The village of Aſpalathus [120], and long afterwards the provincial town of Spalatro, have grown out of its ruins. The golden gate now opens into the market-place. St. John the Baptiſt has uſurped the honours of Æſculapius: and the temple of Jupiter, under the protection of the Virgin, is converted into the cathedral church. For this account of Diocletian's palace, we are principally indebted to an ingenious artiſt of our own time and country, whom a very liberal curioſity carried into the heart of Dalmatia [121]. But there is room to ſuſpect, that the elegance of his deſigns and engraving has ſomewhat flattered the objects which it was their purpoſe to repreſent. We are informed by a more recent and very judicious traveller, that the awful ruins of Spalatro are not leſs expreſſive of the decline of the arts, than of the greatneſs of the Roman empire in the time of Diocletian [122]. If ſuch was indeed the ſtate of architecture, we muſt naturally believe that painting and ſculpture had experienced a ſtill more

Decline of the arts.

CHAP. XIII.

ſenſible decay. The practice of architecture is directed by a few general and even mechanical rules. But ſculpture, and above all, painting, propoſe to themſelves the imitation not only of the forms of nature, but of the characters and paſſions of the human ſoul. In thoſe ſublime arts, the dexterity of the hand is of little avail, unleſs it is animated by fancy, and guided by the moſt correct taſte and obſervation.

Of letters.

It is almoſt unneceſſary to remark, that the civil diſtractions of the empire, the licence of the ſoldiers, the inroads of the barbarians, and the progreſs of deſpotiſm, had proved very unfavourable to genius, and even to learning. The ſucceſſion of Illyrian princes reſtored the empire, without reſtoring the ſciences. Their military education was not calculated to inſpire them with the love of letters; and even the mind of Dioclétian, however active and capacious in buſineſs, was totally uninformed by ſtudy or ſpeculation. The profeſſions of law and phyſic are of ſuch common uſe and certain profit, that they will always ſecure a ſufficient number of practitioners, endowed with a reaſonable degree of abilities and knowledge; but it does not appear that the ſtudents in thoſe two faculties appeal to any celebrated maſters who have flouriſhed within that period. The voice of poetry was ſilent. Hiſtory was reduced to dry and confuſed abridgments, alike deſtitute of amuſement and inſtruction. A languid and affected eloquence was ſtill retained in the pay and ſervice of the emperors, who

encouraged not any arts except thoſe which contributed to the gratification of their pride, or the defence of their power [123].

CHAP. XIII.

The declining age of learning and of mankind is marked, however, by the riſe and rapid progreſs of the new Platoniſts. The ſchool of Alexandria ſilenced thoſe of Athens; and the ancient ſects enrolled themſelves under the banners of the more faſhionable teachers, who recommended their ſyſtem by the novelty of their method, and the auſterity of their manners. Several of theſe maſters, Ammonius, Plotinus, Amelius, and Porphyry [124], were men of profound thought, and intenſe application; but by miſtaking the true object of philoſophy, their labours contributed much leſs to improve than to corrupt the human underſtanding. The knowledge that is ſuited to our ſituation and powers, the whole compaſs of moral, natural, and mathematical ſcience, was neglected by the new Platoniſts; whilſt they exhauſted their ſtrength in the verbal diſputes of metaphyſics, attempted to explore the ſecrets of the inviſible world, and ſtudied to reconcile Ariſtotle with Plato, on ſubjects of which both theſe philoſophers were as ignorant as the reſt of mankind. Conſuming their reaſon in theſe deep but unſubſtantial meditations, their minds were expoſed to illuſions of fancy. They flattered themſelves that they poſſeſſed the ſecret of diſengaging the ſoul from its corporeal priſon; claimed a familiar intercourſe with dæmons and ſpirits; and, by a very ſingular revolution, converted the ſtudy of

The new Platoniſts.

CHAP. XIII.

philoſophy into that of magic. The ancient ſages had derided the popular ſuperſtition; after diſguiſing its extravagance by the thin pretence of allegory, the diſciples of Plotinus and Porphyry became its moſt zealous defenders. As they agreed with the Chriſtians in a few myſterious points of faith, they attacked the remainder of their theological ſyſtem with all the fury of civil war. The new Platoniſts would ſcarcely deſerve a place in the hiſtory of ſcience, but in that of the church the mention of them will very frequently occur.

CHAP. XIV.

Troubles after the Abdication of Diocletian. — Death of Conſtantius. — Elevation of Conſtantine and Maxentius. — Six Emperors at the ſame Time. — Death of Maximian and Galerius. — Victories of Conſtantine over Maxentius and Licinius. — Reunion of the Empire under the Authority of Conſtantine.

CHAP. XIV. Period of civil wars and confuſion. A. D. 305 — 323.

THE balance of power eſtabliſhed by Diocletian ſubſiſted no longer than while it was ſuſtained by the firm and dexterous hand of the founder. It required ſuch a fortunate mixture of different tempers and abilities, as could ſcarcely be found or even expected a ſecond time; two emperors without jealouſy; two Cæſars without ambition, and the ſame general intereſt invariably purſued by four independent princes. The abdication of Diocletian and Maximian was ſucceeded by eighteen years of diſcord and confuſion. The empire was afflicted by five civil wars; and the remainder of the time was not ſo much a ſtate of tranquillity as a ſuſpenſion of arms between ſeveral hoſtile monarchs, who, viewing each other with an eye of fear and hatred, ſtrove to increaſe their reſpective forces at the expence of their ſubjects.

Character and ſituation of Conſtantius.

As ſoon as Diocletian and Maximian had reſigned the purple, their ſtation, according to the rules of the new conſtitution, was filled by the two Cæſars, Conſtantius and Galerius, who immediately aſſumed the title of Auguſtus [1]. The honours

CHAP. XIV.

of ſeniority and precedence were allowed to the former of thoſe princes, and he continued, under a new appellation, to adminiſter his ancient department of Gaul, Spain, and Britain. The government of thoſe ample provinces was ſufficient to exerciſe his talents, and to ſatisfy his ambition. Clemency, temperance, and moderation, diſtinguished the amiable character of Conſtantius, and his fortunate ſubjects had frequently occaſion to compare the virtues of their ſovereign with the paſſions of Maximian, and even with the arts of Diocletian [3]. Inſtead of imitating their eaſtern pride and magnificence, Conſtantius preſerved the modeſty of a Roman prince. He declared, with unaffected ſincerity, that his moſt valued treaſure was in the hearts of his people, and that, whenever the dignity of the throne, or the danger of the ſtate, required any extraordinary ſupply, he could depend with confidence on their gratitude and liberality [4]. The provincials of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, ſenſible of his worth and of their own happineſs, reflected with anxiety on the declining health of the emperor Conſtantius, and the tender age of his numerous family, the iſſue of his ſecond marriage with the daughter of Maximian.

Of Galerius.

The ſtern temper of Galerius was caſt in a very different mould; and while he commanded the eſteem of his ſubjects, he ſeldom condeſcended to ſolicit their affections. His fame in arms, and above all, the ſucceſs of the Perſian war, had elated his haughty mind, which was naturally impatient of a ſuperior, or even of an equal. If it were poſſible to rely on the partial teſtimony of an injudicious

writer, we might aſcribe the abdication of Diocletian to the menaces of Galerius, and relate the particulars of a *private* converſation between the two princes, in which the former diſcovered as much puſillanimity as the latter diſplayed ingratitude and arrogance [t]. But theſe obſcure anecdotes are ſufficiently refuted by an impartial view of the character and conduct of Diocletian. Whatever might otherwiſe have been his intentions, if he had apprehended any danger from the violence of Galerius, his good ſenſe would have inſtructed him to prevent the ignominious conteſt; and as he had held the ſceptre with glory, he would have reſigned it without diſgrace. CHAP. XIV.

The two Cæſars, Severus and Maximin.

After the elevation of Conſtantius and Galerius to the rank of *Auguſti*, two new *Cæſars* were required to ſupply their place, and to complete the ſyſtem of the Imperial government. Diocletian was ſincerely deſirous of withdrawing himſelf from the world; he conſidered Galerius, who had married his daughter, as the firmeſt ſupport of his family and of the empire; and he conſented, without reluctance, that his ſucceſſor ſhould aſſume the merit as well as the envy of the important nomination. It wat fixed without conſulting the intereſt or inclination of the princes of the Weſt. Each of them had a ſon who was arrived at the age of manhood, and who might have been deemed the moſt natural candidates for the vacant honour. But the impotent reſentment of Maximian was no longer to be dreaded; and the moderate Conſtantius, though he might deſpiſe

CHAP. XIV.

the dangers, was humanely apprehenſive of the calamities of civil war. The two perſons whom Galerius promoted to the rank of Cæſar, were much better ſuited to ſerve the views of his ambition; and their principal recommendation ſeems to have conſiſted in the want of merit or perſonal conſequence. The firſt of theſe was Daza, or, as he was afterwards called, Maximin, whoſe mother was the ſiſter of Galerius. The unexperienced youth ſtill betrayed by his manners and language his ruſtic education, when, to his own aſtoniſhment as well as that of the world, he was inveſted by Diocletian with the purple, exalted to the dignity of Cæſar, and intruſted with the ſovereign command of Egypt and Syria [5]. At the ſame time, Severus, a faithful ſervant, addicted to pleaſure, but not incapable of buſineſs, was ſent to Milan, to receive from the reluctant hands of Maximian the Cæſarean ornaments, and the poſſeſſion of Italy and Africa [6]. According to the forms of the conſtitution, Severus acknowledged the ſupremacy of the weſtern emperor; but he was abſolutely devoted to the commands of his benefactor Galerius, who, reſerving to himſelf the intermediate countries from the confines of Italy to thoſe of Syria, firmly eſtabliſhed his power over three-fourths of the monarchy. In the full confidence, that the approaching death of Conſtantius would leave him ſole maſter of the Roman world, we are aſſured that he had arranged in his mind a long ſucceſſion of future princes, and that he meditated his own retreat from public life, after he

should have accomplished a glorious reign of about twenty years [7].

Ambition of Galerius disappointed by two revolutions.

But within less than eighteen months, two unexpected revolutions overturned the ambitious schemes of Galerius. The hopes of uniting the western provinces to his empire, were disappointed by the elevation of Constantine, whilst Italy and Africa were lost by the successful revolt of Maxentius.

Birth, education, and escape of Constantine. A. D. 274.

I. The fame of Constantine has rendered posterity attentive to the most minute circumstances of his life and actions. The place of his birth, as well as the condition of his mother Helena, have been the subject not only of literary but of national disputes. Notwithstanding the recent tradition, which assigns for her father, a British king, we are obliged to confess, that Helena was the daughter of an innkeeper [8]; but at the same time we may defend the legality of her marriage, against those who have represented her as the concubine of Constantius [9]. The great Constantine was most probably born at Naissus, in Dacia [10]; and it is not surprising, that in a family and province distinguished only by the profession of arms, the youth should discover very little inclination to improve his mind by the acquisition of knowlegde [11]. He was about eighteen years of age when his father was promoted to the rank of Cæsar; but that fortunate event was attended with his mother's divorce; and the splendour of an Imperial alliance reduced the son of Helena to a state of disgrace and humiliation. Instead of following

A. D. 292.

CHAP. XIV.

Conſtantius in the Weſt, he remained in the ſervice of Diocletian, ſignalized his valour in the wars of Egypt and Perſia, and gradually roſe to the honourable ſtation of a tribune of the firſt order. The figure of Conſtantine was tall and majeſtic; he was dexterous in all his exerciſes, intrepid in war, affable in peace; in his whole conduct, the active ſpirit of youth was tempered by habitual prudence; and while his mind was engroſſed by ambition, he appeared cold and inſenſible to the allurements of pleaſure. The favour of the people and ſoldiers, who had named him as a worthy candidate for the rank of Cæſar, ſerved only to exaſperate the jealouſy of Galerius; and though prudence might reſtrain him from exerciſing any open violence, an abſolute monarch is ſeldom at a loſs how to execute a ſure and ſecret revenge [10]. Every hour increaſed the danger of Conſtantine, and the anxiety of his father, who, by repeated letters, expreſſed the warmeſt deſire of embracing his ſon. For ſome time the policy of Galerius ſupplied him with delays and excuſes, but it was impoſſible long to refuſe ſo natural a requeſt of his aſſociate, without maintaining his refuſal by arms. The permiſſion of the journey was reluctantly granted, and whatever precautions the emperor might have taken to intercept a return, the conſequences of which, he, with ſo much reaſon, apprehended, they were effectually diſappointed by the incredible diligence of Conſtantine [11]. Leaving the palace of Nicomedia in the night, he travelled poſt through Bithynia, Thrace, Dacia,

Pannonia, Italy, and Gaul, and amidſt the joyful acclamations of the people, reached the port of Boulogne, in the very moment when his father was preparing to embark for Britain [14].

Death of Conſtantius, and elevation of Conſtantine. A. D. 306. July 25.

The British expedition, and an eaſy victory over the barbarians of Caledonia, were the laſt exploits of the reign of Conſtantius. He ended his life in the Imperial palace of York, fifteen months after he had received the title of Auguſtus, and almoſt fourteen years and a half after he had been promoted to the rank of Cæſar. His death was immediately ſucceeded by the elevation of Conſtantine. The ideas of inheritance and ſucceſſion are ſo very familiar, that the generality of mankind conſider them as founded, not only in reaſon, but in nature itſelf. Our imagination readily transfers the ſame principles from private property to public dominion: and whenever a virtuous father leaves behind him a ſon whoſe merit ſeems to juſtify the eſteem, or even the hopes of the people, the joint influence of prejudice and of affection operates with irreſiſtible weight. The flower of the weſtern armies had followed Conſtantius into Britain, and the national troops were reinforced by a numerous body of Alemanni, who obeyed the orders of Crocus, one of their hereditary chieftains [15]. The opinion of their own importance, and the aſſurance that Britain, Gaul, and Spain would acquieſce in their nomination, were diligently inculcated to the legions by the adherents of Conſtantine. The ſoldiers were asked: Whether they could heſitate a moment between

CHAP. XIV.

the honour of placing at their head the worthy ſon of their beloved emperor, and the ignominy of tamely expecting the arrival of ſome obſcure ſtranger, on whom it might pleaſe the ſovereign of Aſia to beſtow the armies and provinces of the Weſt. It was inſinuated to them, that gratitude and liberality held a diſtinguished place among the virtues of Conſtantine; nor did that artful prince shew himſelf to the troops, till they were prepared to ſalute him with the names of Auguſtus and Emperor. The throne was the object of his deſires; and had he been leſs actuated by ambition, it was his only means of ſafety. He was well acquainted with the character and ſentiments of Galerius, and ſufficiently apprized, that if he wished to live he muſt determine to reign. The decent and even obſtinate reſiſtance which he choſe to affect [16], was contrived to juſtify his uſurpation; nor did he yield to the acclamations of the army, till he had provided the proper materials for a letter, which he immediately diſpatched to the emperor of the Eaſt. Conſtantine informed him of the melancholy event of his father's death, modeſtly aſſerted his natural claim to the ſucceſſion, and reſpectfully lamented, that the affectionate violence of his troops had not permitted him to ſolicit the Imperial purple in the regular and conſtitutional manner. The firſt emotions of Galerius were thoſe of ſurpriſe, diſappointment, and rage; and as he could ſeldom reſtrain his paſſions, he loudly threatened, that he would commit to

the

CHAP. XIV.

the flames both the letter and the meſſenger. But his reſentment inſenſibly ſubſided; and when he recollected the doubtful chance of war, when he had weighed the character and ſtrength of his adverſary, he conſented to embrace the honourable accommodation which the prudence of Conſtantine had left open to him. Without either condemning or ratifying the choice of the British army, Galerius accepted the ſon of his deceaſed colleague, as the ſovereign of the provinces beyond the Alps; but he gave him only the title of Cæſar, and the fourth rank among the Roman princes, whilſt he conferred the vacant place of Auguſtus on his favourite Severus. The apparent harmony of the empire was ſtill preſerved, and Conſtantine, who already poſſeſſed the ſubſtance, expected, without impatience, an opportunity of obtaining the honours, of ſupreme power [17].

He is acknowledged by Galerius, who gives him only the title of Cæſar, and that of Auguſtus to Severus.

The children of Conſtantius by his ſecond marriage were ſix in number, three of either ſex, and whoſe Imperial deſcent might have ſolicited a preference over the meaner extraction of the ſon of Helena. But Conſtantine was in the thirty-ſecond year of his age, in the full vigour both of mind and body, at the time when the eldeſt of his brothers could not poſſibly be more than thirteen years old. His claim of ſuperior merit had been allowed and ratified by the dying emperor [18]. In his laſt moments, Conſtantius bequeathed to his eldeſt ſon the care of the ſafety as well as greatneſs of the family; conjuring him to aſſume both the authority and the ſentiments of a father with re-

The brothers and ſiſters of Conſtantine.

CHAP. XIV.

gard to the children of Theodora. Their liberal education, advantageous marriages, the ſecure dignity of their lives, and the firſt honours of the ſtate with which they were inveſted, atteſt the fraternal affection of Conſtantine; and as thoſe princes poſſeſſed a mild and grateful diſpoſition, they ſubmitted without reluctance to the ſuperiority of his genius and fortune [19].

Diſcontent of the Romans at the apprehenſion of taxes.

II. The ambitious ſpirit of Galerius was ſcarcely reconciled to the diſappointment of his views upon the Gallic provinces, before the unexpected loſs of Italy wounded his pride as well as power in a ſtill more ſenſible part. The long abſence of the emperors had filled Rome with diſcontent and indignation; and the people gradually diſcovered, that the preference given to Nicomedia and Milan, was not to be aſcribed to the particular inclination of Diocletian, but to the permanent form of government which he had inſtituted. It was in vain that, a few months after his abdication, his ſucceſſors dedicated, under his name, thoſe magnificent baths, whoſe ruins ſtill ſupply the ground as well as the materials for ſo many churches and convents [20]. The tranquillity of thoſe elegant receſſes of eaſe and luxury was diſturbed by the impatient murmurs of the Romans; and a report was inſenſibly circulated, that the ſums expended in erecting thoſe buildings, would ſoon be required at their hands. About that time the avarice of Galerius, or perhaps the exigencies of the ſtate, had induced him to make a very ſtrict and rigorous inquiſition into the property of his ſubjects

for the purpoſe of a general taxation, both on their lands and on their perſons. A very minute ſurvey appears to have been taken of their real eſtates; and wherever there was the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion of concealment, torture was very freely employed to obtain a ſincere declaration of their perſonal wealth [21]. The privileges which had exalted Italy above the rank of the provinces, were no longer regarded: and the officers of the revenue already began to number the Roman people, and to ſettle the proportion of the new taxes. Even when the ſpirit of freedom had been utterly extinguiſhed, the tameſt ſubjects have ſometimes ventured to reſiſt an unprecedented invaſion of their property; but on this occaſion the injury was aggravated by the inſult, and the ſenſe of private intereſt was quickened by that of national honour. The conqueſt of Macedonia, as we have already obſerved, had delivered the Roman people from the weight of perſonal taxes. Though they had experienced every form of deſpotiſm, they had now enjoyed that exemption near five hundred years; nor could they patiently brook the inſolence of an Illyrian peaſant, who, from his diſtant reſidence in Aſia, preſumed to number Rome among the tributary cities of his empire. The riſing fury of the people was encouraged by the authority, or at leaſt the connivance, of the ſenate; and the feeble remains of the Prætorian guards, who had reaſon to apprehend their own diſſolution, embraced ſo honourable a pretence, and declared their readineſs to draw their ſwords in the ſervice of their

CHAP. XIV.

oppreſſed country. It was the wish, and it ſoon became the hope, of every citizen, that after expelling from Italy their foreign tyrants, they ſhould elect a prince who, by the place of his reſidence, and by his maxims of government, might once more deſerve the title of Roman emperor. The name, as well as the ſituation, of Maxentius, determined in his favour the popular enthuſiaſm.

Maxentius declared emperor at Rome. A. D. 306. 28th Oct.

Maxentius was the ſon of the emperor Maximian, and he had married the daughter of Galerius. His birth and alliance ſeemed to offer him the faireſt promiſe of ſucceeding to the empire; but his vices and incapacity procured him the ſame excluſion from the dignity of Cæſar, which Conſtantine had deſerved by a dangerous ſuperiority of merit. The policy of Galerius preferred ſuch aſſociates, as would never diſgrace the choice, nor diſpute the commands of their benefactor. An obſcure ſtranger was therefore raiſed to the throne of Italy, and the ſon of the late emperor of the Weſt was left to enjoy the luxury of a private fortune in a villa a few miles diſtant from the capital. The gloomy paſſions of his ſoul, ſhame, vexation, and rage, were inflamed by envy on the news of Conſtantine's ſucceſs; but the hopes of Maxentius revived with the public diſcontent, and he was eaſily perſuaded to unite his perſonal injury and pretenſions with the cauſe of the Roman people. Two Prætorian tribunes and a commiſſary of proviſions undertook the management of the conſpiracy; and as every order of men was actuated by the ſame ſpirit, the immediate event was neither

doubtful nor difficult. The præfect of the city, and a few magiſtrates, who maintained their fidelity to Severus, were maſſacred by the guards; and Maxentius, inveſted with the Imperial ornaments, was acknowledged by the applauding ſenate and people as the protector of the Roman freedom and dignity. It is uncertain whether Maximian was previously acquainted with the conſpiracy; but as ſoon as the ſtandard of rebellion was erected at Rome, the old emperor broke from the retirement where the authority of Diocletian had condemned him to paſs a life of melancholy ſolitude, and concealed his returning ambition under the diſguiſe of paternal tenderneſs. At the requeſt of his ſon and of the ſenate, he condeſcended to re-aſſume the purple. His ancient dignity, his experience, and his fame in arms, added ſtrength as well as reputation to the party of Maxentius [22].

CHAP. XIV.

Maximian re-aſſumes the purple.

According to the advice, or rather the orders, of his colleague, the emperor Severus immediately haſtened to Rome, in the full confidence, that, by his unexpected celerity, he ſhould eaſily ſuppreſs the tumult of an unwarlike populace, commanded by a licentious youth. But he found on his arrival the gates of the city ſhut againſt him, the walls filled with men and arms, an experienced general at the head of the rebels, and his own troops without ſpirit or affection. A large body of Moors deſerted to the enemy, allured by the promiſe of a large donative; and, if it be true that they had been levied by Maximian in his African war, preferring the natural feelings of

Defeat and death of Severus.

CHAP. XIV.

gratitude to the artificial ties of allegiance. Anulinus, the Prætorian præfect, declared himſelf in favour of Maxentius, and drew after him the moſt conſiderable part of the troops, accuſtomed to obey his commands. Rome, according to the expreſſion of an orator, recalled her armies; and the unfortunate Severus, deſtitute of force and of counſel, retired, or rather fled, with precipitation to Ravenna. Here he might for ſome time have been ſafe. The fortifications of Ravenna were able to reſiſt the attempts, and the moraſſes that ſurrounded the town were ſufficient to prevent the approach, of the Italian army. The ſea, which Severus commanded with a powerful fleet, ſecured him an inexhauſtible ſupply of proviſions, and gave a free entrance to the legions, which, on the return of ſpring, would advance to his aſſiſtance from Illyricum and the Eaſt. Maximian, who conducted the ſiege in perſon, was ſoon convinced that he might waſte his time and his army in the fruitleſs enterpriſe, and that he had nothing to hope either from force or famine. With an art more ſuitable to the character of Diocletian than to his own, he directed his attack, not ſo much againſt the walls of Ravenna, as againſt the mind of Severus. The treachery which he had experienced, diſpoſed that unhappy prince to diſtruſt the moſt ſincere of his friends and adherents. The emiſſaries of Maximian eaſily perſuaded his credulity, that a conſpiracy was formed to betray the town, and prevailed upon his fears not to expoſe himſelf to the diſcretion of an irritated conqueror,

but to accept the faith of an honourable capitulation. He was at firſt received with humanity, and treated with reſpect. Maximian conducted the captive emperor to Rome, and gave him the moſt ſolemn aſſurances that he had ſecured his life by the reſignation of the purple. But Severus could obtain only an eaſy death and an Imperial funeral. When the ſentence was ſigned to him, the manner of executing it was left to his own choice; he preferred the favourite mode of the ancients, that of opening his veins: and as ſoon as he expired, his body was carried to the ſepulchre which had been conſtructed for the family of Gallienus [21].

A. D. 307. February.

Though the characters of Conſtantine and Maxentius had very little affinity with each other, their ſituation and intereſt were the ſame; and prudence ſeemed to require that they ſhould unite their forces againſt the common enemy. Notwithſtanding the ſuperiority of his age and dignity, the indefatigable Maximian paſſed the Alps, and courting a perſonal interview with the ſovereign of Gaul, carried with him his daughter Fauſta as the pledge of the new alliance. The marriage was celebrated at Arles with every circumſtance of magnificence; and the ancient colleague of Diocletian, who again aſſerted his claim to the weſtern empire, conferred on his ſon-in-law and ally the title of Auguſtus. By conſenting to receive that honour from Maximian, Conſtantine ſeemed to embrace the cauſe of Rome and of the ſenate; but his profeſſions were ambiguous, and his aſſiſt-

Maximian gives his daughter Fauſta, and the title of Auguſtus, to Conſtantine. A. D. 307. March 31.

CHAP. XIV.

ance slow and ineffectual. He conſidered with attention the approaching conteſt between the maſters of Italy and the emperor of the Eaſt, and was prepared to conſult his own ſafety or ambition in the event of the war [24].

Galerius invades Italy.

The importance of the occaſion called for the preſence and abilities of Galerius. At the head of a powerful army collected from Illyricum and the Eaſt, he entered Italy, reſolved to revenge the death of Severus, and to chaſtiſe the rebellious Romans; or, as he expreſſed his intentions, in the furious language of a barbarian, to extirpate the ſenate, and to deſtroy the people by the ſword. But the ſkill of Maximian had concerted a prudent ſyſtem of defence. The invader found every place, hoſtile, fortified, and inacceſſible; and though he forced his way as far as Narni, within ſixty miles of Rome, his dominion in Italy was confined to the narrow limits of his camp. Senſible of the increaſing difficulties of his enterpriſe, the haughty Galerius made the firſt advances towards a reconciliation, and diſpatched two of his moſt conſiderable officers to tempt the Roman princes by the offer of a conference and the declaration of his paternal regard for Maxentius, who might obtain much more from his liberality than he could hope from the doubtful chance of war [25]. The offers of Galerius were rejected with firmneſs, his perfidious friendship refuſed with contempt, and it was not long before he diſcovered, that, unleſs he provided for his ſafety by a timely retreat, he had ſome reaſon to apprehend the fate of Severus.

CHAP. XIV.

The wealth, which the Romans defended againſt his rapacious tyranny, they freely contributed for his deſtruction. The name of Maximian, the popular arts of his ſon, the ſecret diſtribution of large ſums, and the promiſe of ſtill more liberal rewards, checked the ardour, and corrupted the fidelity of the Illyrian legions; and when Galerius at length gave the ſignal of the retreat, it was with ſome difficulty that he could prevail on his veterans not to deſert a banner which had ſo often conducted them to victory and honour. A contemporary writer aſſigns two other cauſes for the failure of the expedition; but they are both of ſuch a nature, that a cautious hiſtorian will ſcarcely venture to adopt them. We are told that Galerius, who had formed a very imperfect notion of the greatneſs of Rome by the cities of the Eaſt, with which he was acquainted, found his forces inadequate to the ſiege of that immenſe capital. But the extent of a city ſerves only to render it more acceſſible to the enemy; Rome had long ſince been accuſtomed to ſubmit on the approach of a conqueror; nor could the temporary enthuſiaſm of the people have long contended againſt the diſcipline and valour of the legions. We are likewiſe informed, that the legions themſelves were ſtruck with horror and remorſe, and that thoſe pious ſons of the republic refuſed to violate the ſanctity of their venerable parent [26]. But when we recollect with how much eaſe, in the more ancient civil wars, the zeal of party, and the habits of military obedience had converted

CHAP. XIV.

the native citizens of Rome into her moſt implacable enemies, we ſhall be inclined to diſtruſt this extreme delicacy of ſtrangers and barbarians, who had never beheld Italy, till they entered it in a hoſtile manner. Had they not been reſtrained by motives of a more intereſted nature, they would probably have anſwered Galerius in the words of Cæſar's veterans; „ If our general wiſhes to lead „ us to the banks of the Tyber, we are prepared „ to trace out his camp. Whatſoever walls he „ has determined to level with the ground, our „ hands are ready to work the engines: nor ſhall „ we heſitate, should the name of the devoted „ city be Rome itſelf. " Theſe are indeed the expreſſions of a poet; but of a poet who has been diſtinguished and even cenſured for his ſtrict adherence to the truth of hiſtory [47].

His retreat.

The legions of Galerius exhibit a very melancholy proof of their diſpoſition, by the ravages which they committed in their retreat. They murdered, they ravished, they plundered, they drove away the flocks and herds of the Italians, they burnt the villages through which they paſſed, and they endeavoured to deſtroy the country which it had not been in their power to ſubdue. During the whole march, Maxentius hung on their rear, but he very prudently declined a general engagement with thoſe brave and deſperate veterans. His father had undertaken a ſecond journey into Gaul, with the hope of perſuading Conſtantine, who had aſſembled an army on the frontier, to join the purſuit and to complete the

victory. But the actions of Conſtantine were guided by reaſon and not by reſentment. He perſiſted in the wiſe reſolution of maintaining a balance of power in the divided empire, and he no longer hated Galerius, when that aſpiring prince had ceaſed to be an object of terror [28]. CHAP. XIV.

The mind of Galerius was the moſt ſuſceptible of the ſterner paſſions, but it was not however incapable of a ſincere and laſting friendship. Licinius, whoſe manners as well as character were not unlike his own, ſeems to have engaged both his affection and eſteem. Their intimacy had commenced in the happier period perhaps of their youth and obſcurity. It had been cemented by the freedom and dangers of a military life; they had advanced, almoſt by equal ſteps, through the ſucceſſive honours of the ſervice; and as ſoon as Galerius was inveſted with the Imperial dignity, he ſeems to have conceived the deſign of raiſing his companion to the ſame rank with himſelf. During the short period of his proſperity, he conſidered the rank of Cæſar as unworthy of the age and merit of Licinius, and rather choſe to reſerve for him the place of Conſtantius, and the empire of the Weſt. While the emperor was employed in the Italian war, he intruſted his friend with the defence of the Danube; and immediately after his return from that unfortunate expedition, he inveſted Licinius with the vacant purple of Severus, reſigning to his immediate command the provinces of Illyricum [29]. The news of his promotion was no ſooner carried into the

Elevation of Licinius to the rank of Auguſtus, A. D. 307. Nov. 11.

and of Maximin.

CHAP. XIV.

East, than Maximin, who governed, or rather oppressed, the countries of Egypt and Syria, betrayed his envy and discontent, disdained the inferior name of Cæsar, and notwithstanding the prayers as well as arguments of Galerius, exacted, almost by violence, the equal title of Augustus [10]. For the first, and indeed for the last time, the Roman world was administered by six emperors.

Six emperors. A. D. 308.

In the West, Constantine and Maxentius affected to reverence their father Maximian. In the East, Licinius and Maximin honoured with more real consideration their benefactor Galerius. The opposition of interest, and the memory of a recent war, divided the empire into two great hostile powers; but their mutual fears produced an apparent tranquillity, and even a feigned reconciliation, till the death of the elder princes, of Maximian, and more particularly of Galerius, gave a new direction to the views and passions of their surviving associates.

Misfortunes of Maximian.

When Maximian had reluctantly abdicated the empire, the venal orators of the times applauded his philosophic moderation. When his ambition excited, or at least encouraged, a civil war, they returned thanks to his generous patriotism, and gently censured that love of ease and retirement which had withdrawn him from the public service [11]. But it was impossible, that minds like those of Maximian and his son, could long possess in harmony an undivided power. Maxentius considered himself as the legal sovereign of Italy, elected by the Roman senate and people; nor

would he endure the controul of his father, who arrogantly declared, that by *his* name and abilities the rash youth had been eſtabliſhed on the throne. The cauſe was ſolemnly pleaded before the Prætorian guards, and thoſe troops, who dreaded the ſeverity of the old emperor, eſpouſed the party of Maxentius [12]. The life and freedom of Maximian were however reſpected, and he retired from Italy into Illyricum, affecting to lament his paſt conduct, and ſecretly contriving new miſchiefs. But Galerius, who was well acquainted with his character, ſoon obliged him to leave his dominions, and the laſt refuge of the diſappointed Maximian was the court of his ſon-in-law Conſtantine [13]. He was received with reſpect by that artful prince, and with the appearance of filial tenderneſs by the empreſs Fauſta. That he might remove every ſuſpicion, he reſigned the Imperial purple a ſecond time [14], profeſſing himſelf at length convinced of the vanity of greatneſs and ambition. Had he perſevered in this reſolution, he might have ended his life with leſs dignity indeed than in his firſt retirement, yet, however, with comfort and reputation. But the near proſpect of a throne brought back to his remembrance the ſtate from whence he was fallen, and he reſolved, by a deſperate effort, either to reign or to perish. An incurſion of the Franks had ſummoned Conſtantine, with a part of his army, to the banks of the Rhine; the remainder of the troops were ſtationed in the ſouthern provinces of Gaul, which lay expoſed

CHAP. XIV.

CHAP. XIV.

to the enterprises of the Italian emperor, and a considerable treasure was deposited in the city of Arles. Maximian either craftily invented, or hastily credited, a vain report of the death of Constantine. Without hesitation he ascended the throne, seized the treasure, and scattering it with his accustomed profusion among the soldiers, endeavoured to awake in their minds the memory of his ancient dignity and exploits. Before he could establish his authority, or finish the negotiation which he appears to have entered into with his son Maxentius, the celerity of Constantine defeated all his hopes. On the first news of his perfidy and ingratitude, that prince returned by rapid marches from the Rhine to the Saone, embarked on the last mentioned river at Chalons, and at Lyons trusting himself to the rapidity of the Rhone, arrived at the gates of Arles, with a military force which it was impossible for Maximian to resist, and which scarcely permitted him to take refuge in the neighbouring city of Marseilles. The narrow neck of land which joined that place to the continent was fortified against the besiegers, whilst the sea was open, either for the escape of Maximian, or for the succours of Maxentius, if the latter should chuse to disguise his invasion of Gaul, under the honourable pretence of defending a distressed, or, as he might allege, an injured father. Apprehensive of the fatal consequences of delay, Constantine gave orders for an immediate assault; but the scaling-ladders were found too short for the height of

CHAP. XIV.

the walls, and Marſeilles might have ſuſtained as long a ſiege as it formerly did againſt the arms of Cæſar, if the garriſon, conſcious either of their fault or of their danger, had not purchaſed their pardon by delivering up the city and the perſon of Maximian. A ſecret but irrevocable ſentence of death was pronounced againſt the uſurper, he obtained only the ſame favour which he had indulged to Severus, and it was published to the world, that, oppreſſed by the remorſe of his repeated crimes, he ſtrangled himſelf with his own hands. After he had loſt the aſſiſtance, and diſdained the moderate counſels, of Diocletian, the ſecond period of his active life was a ſeries of public calamities and perſonal mortifications, which were terminated, in about three years, by an ignominious death. He deſerved his fate; but we ſhould find more reaſon to applaud the humanity of Conſtantine, if he had ſpared an old man, the benefactor of his father, and the father of his wife. During the whole of this melancholy tranſaction, it appears that Fauſta ſacrificed the ſentiments of nature to her conjugal duties [15].

His death. A. D. 310. February.

The laſt years of Galerius were leſs ſhameful and unfortunate; and though he had filled with more glory the ſubordinate ſtation of Cæſar, than the ſuperior rank of Auguſtus, he preſerved, till the moment of his death, the firſt place among the princes of the Roman world. He ſurvived his retreat from Italy about four years, and wiſely relinquishing his views of univerſal empire, he

Death of Galerius. A. D. 311. May.

CHAP. XIV.

devoted the remainder of his life to the enjoyment of pleaſure, and to the execution of ſome works of public utility, among which we may diſtinguish the diſcharging into the Danube the ſuperfluous waters of the lake Pelſo, and the cutting down the immenſe foreſts that encompaſſed it; an operation worthy of a monarch, ſince it gave an extenſive country to the agriculture of his Pannonian ſubjects [36]. His death was occaſioned by a very painful and lingering diſorder. His body, ſwelled by an intemperate courſe of life to an unwieldy corpulence, was covered with ulcers, and devoured by innumerable ſwarms of thoſe inſects, who have given their name to a moſt loathſome diſeaſe [37]; but as Galerius had offended a very zealous and powerful party among his ſubjects, his ſufferings, inſtead of exciting their compaſſion, have been celebrated as the viſible effects of divine juſtice [38].

His dominions ſhared between Maximin and Licinius.

He had no ſooner expired in his palace of Nicomedia, than the two emperors who were indebted for their purple to his favour, began to collect their forces, with the intention either of diſputing, or of dividing, the dominions which he had left without a maſter. They were perſuaded however to deſiſt from the former deſign, and to agree in the latter. The provinces of Aſia fell to the ſhare of Maximin, and thoſe of Europe augmented the portion of Licinius. The Helleſpont and the Thracian Boſphorus formed their mutual boundary, and the banks of thoſe narrow ſeas, which flowed in the midſt of the Roman world,

world, were covered with ſoldiers, with arms, and with fortifications. The deaths of Maximian and of Galerius reduced the number of emperors to four. The ſenſe of their true intereſt ſoon connected Licinius and Conſtantine; a ſecret alliance was concluded between Maximin and Maxentius, and their unhappy ſubjects expected with terror the bloody conſequences of their inevitable diſſenſions, which were no longer reſtrained by the fear or the reſpect which they had entertained for Galerius [39].

CHAP. XIV.

Among ſo many crimes and misfortunes occaſioned by the paſſions of the Roman princes, there is ſome pleaſure in diſcovering a ſingle action which may be aſcribed to their virtue. In the ſixth year of his reign, Conſtantine viſited the city of Autun, and generously remitted the arrears of tribute, reducing at the ſame time the proportion of their aſſeſſment, from twenty-five to eighteen thouſand heads, ſubject to the real and perſonal capitation [40]. Yet even this indulgence affords the moſt unqueſtionable proof of the public miſery. This tax was ſo extremely oppreſſive, either in itſelf or in the mode of collecting it, that, whilſt the revenue was increaſed by extortion, it was diminished by deſpair: a conſiderable part of the territory of Autun was left uncultivated; and great numbers of the provincials rather choſe to live as exiles and outlaws, than to ſupport the weight of civil ſociety. It is but too probable, that the bountiful emperor relieved, by a partial act of liberality, one among

Adminiſtration of Conſtantine in Gaul. A. D. 306. — 312.

CHAP. XIV.

the many evils which he had cauſed by his general maxims of adminiſtration. But even thoſe maxims were leſs the effect of choice than of neceſſity. And if we except the death of Maximian, the reign of Conſtantine in Gaul ſeems to have been the moſt innocent and even virtuous period of his life. The provinces were protected by his preſence from the inroads of the barbarians, who either dreaded or experienced his active valour. After a ſignal victory over the Franks and Alemanni, ſeveral of their princes were expoſed by his order to the wild beaſts in the amphitheatre of Treves, and the people ſeem to have enjoyed the ſpectacle, without diſcovering, in ſuch a treatment of royal captives, any thing that was repugnant to the laws of nations or of humanity [41].

Tyranny of Maxentius in Italy and Africa. A. D. 306. —312.

The virtues of Conſtantine were rendered more illuſtrious by the vices of Maxentius. Whilſt the Gallic provinces enjoyed as much happineſs as the condition of the times was capable of receiving, Italy and Africa groaned under the dominion of a tyrant as contemptible as he was odious. The zeal of flattery and faction has indeed too frequently ſacrificed the reputation of the vanquished to the glory of their ſucceſsful rivals; but even thoſe writers who have revealed, with the moſt freedom and pleaſure, the faults of Conſtantine, unanimously confeſs, that Maxentius was cruel, rapacious, and profligate [42]. He had the good fortune to ſuppreſs a slight rebellion in Africa. The governor and a few adhe-

rents had been guilty; the province ſuffered for their crime. The flouriſhing cities of Cirtha and Carthage, and the whole extent of that fertile country, were waſted by fire and ſword. The abuſe of victory was followed by the abuſe of law and juſtice. A formidable army of ſycophants and delators invaded Africa; the rich and the noble were eaſily convicted of a connexion with the rebels; and thoſe among them who experienced the emperor's clemency, were only puniſhed by the confiſcation of their eſtates [43]. So ſignal a victory was celebrated by a magnificent triumph, and Maxentius expoſed to the eyes of the people the ſpoils and captives of a Roman province. The ſtate of the capital was no leſs deſerving of compaſſion than that of Africa. The wealth of Rome ſupplied an inexhauſtible fund for his vain and prodigal expences; and the miniſters of his revenue were ſkilled in the arts of rapine. It was under his reign that the method of exacting a *free gift* from the ſenators was firſt invented; and as the ſum was inſenſibly increaſed, the pretences of levying it, a victory, a birth, a marriage, or an Imperial conſulſhip, were proportionably multiplied [44]. Maxentius had imbibed the ſame implacable averſion to the ſenate, which had characterized moſt of the former tyrants of Rome: nor was it poſſible for his ungrateful temper to forgive the generous fidelity which had raiſed him to the throne, and ſupported him againſt all his enemies. The lives of the ſenators were expoſed to his jealous ſuſpi-

CHAP. XIV.

cions, the dishonour of their wives and daughters heightened the gratification of his ſenſual paſſions [45]. It may be preſumed, that an Imperial lover was ſeldom reduced to ſigh in vain; but whenever perſuaſion proved ineffectual, he had recourſe to violence; and there remains *one* memorable example of a noble matron, who preſerved her chaſtity by a voluntary death. The ſoldiers were the only order of men whom he appeared to reſpect, or ſtudied to pleaſe. He filled Rome and Italy with armed troops, connived at their tumults, ſuffered them with impunity to plunder, and even to maſſacre, the defenceleſs people [46]; and indulging them in the ſame licentiouſneſs which their emperor enjoyed, Maxentius often beſtowed on his military favourites the ſplendid villa, or the beautiful wife, of a ſenator. A prince of ſuch a character, alike incapable of governing either in peace or in war, might purchaſe the ſupport, but he could never obtain the eſteem, of the army. Yet his pride was equal to his other vices. Whilſt he paſſed his indolent life, either within the walls of his palace, or in the neighbouring gardens of Salluſt, he was repeatedly heard to declare, that *he alone* was emperor, and that the other princes were no more than his lieutenants, on whom he had devolved the defence of the frontier provinces, that he might enjoy without interruption the elegant luxury of the capital. Rome, which had ſo long regretted the abſence, lamented, during the ſix years of his reign, the preſence of her ſovereign [47].

CHAP. XIV. Civil war between Conſtantine and Maxentius. A. D. 312.

Though Conſtantine might view the conduct of Maxentius with abhorrence, and the ſituation of the Romans with compaſſion, we have no reaſon to preſume that he would have taken up arms to punish the one, or to relieve the other. But the tyrant of Italy rashly ventured to provoke a formidable enemy, whoſe ambition had been hitherto reſtrained by conſiderations of prudence, rather than by principles of juſtice **. After the death of Maximian, his titles, according to the eſtabliſhed cuſtom, had been eraſed, and his ſtatues thrown down with ignominy. His ſon, who had perſecuted and deſerted him when alive, affected to diſplay the moſt pious regard for his memory, and gave orders that a ſimilar treatment should be immediately inflicted on all the ſtatues that had been erected in Italy and Africa to the honour of Conſtantine. That wiſe prince, who ſincerely wished to decline a war, with the difficulty and importance of which he was ſufficiently acquainted, at firſt diſſembled the inſult, and ſought for redreſs by the milder expedients of negotiation, till he was convinced, that the hoſtile and ambitious deſigns of the Italian emperor made it neceſſary for him to arm in his own defence. Maxentius, who openly avowed his pretenſions to the whole monarchy of the Weſt, had already prepared a very conſiderable force to invade the Gallic provinces on the ſide of Rhætia; and though he could not expect any aſſiſtance from Licinius, he was flattered with the hope that the legions of Illyricum, allured by

CHAP. XIV.

his preſents and promiſes, would deſert the ſtandard of that prince, and unanimously declare themſelves his ſoldiers and ſubjects [n]. Conſtantine no longer heſitated. He had deliberated with caution, he acted with vigour. He gave a private audience to the ambaſſadors, who, in the name of the ſenate and people, conjured him to deliver Rome from a deteſted tyrant; and, without regarding the timid remonſtrances of his council, he reſolved to prevent the enemy, and to carry the war into the heart of Italy [o].

Preparations.

The enterpriſe was as full of danger as of glory; and the unſucceſsful event of two former invaſions was ſufficient to inſpire the moſt ſerious apprehenſions. The veteran troops who revered the name of Maximian, had embraced in both thoſe wars the party of his ſon, and were now reſtrained by a ſenſe of honour, as well as of intereſt, from entertaining an idea of a ſecond deſertion. Maxentius, who conſidered the Prætorian guards as the firmeſt defence of his throne, had increaſed them to their ancient eſtabliſhment; and they compoſed, including the reſt of the Italians who were inliſted into his ſervice, a formidable body of fourſcore thouſand men. Forty thouſand Moors and Carthaginians had been raiſed ſince the reduction of Africa. Even Sicily furniſhed its proportion of troops; and the armies of Maxentius amounted to one hundred and ſeventy thouſand foot, and eighteen thouſand horſe. The wealth of Italy ſupplied the expences of the war; and the adjacent pro-

vinces were exhauſted, to form immenſe magazines of corn and every other kind of proviſions. The whole force of Conſtantine conſiſted of ninety thouſand foot and eight thouſand horſe [11]; and as the defence of the Rhine required an extraordinary attention during the abſence of the emperor, it was not in his power to employ above half his troops in the Italian expedition, unleſs he ſacrificed the public ſafety to his private quarrel [12]. At the head of about forty thouſand ſoldiers, he marched to encounter an enemy whoſe numbers were at leaſt four times ſuperior to his own. But the armies of Rome, placed at a ſecure diſtance from danger, were enervated by indulgence and luxury. Habituated to the baths and theatres of Rome they took the field with reluctance, and were chiefly compoſed of veterans who had almoſt forgotten, or of new levies, who had never acquired, the uſe of arms and the practice of war. The hardy legions of Gaul had long defended the frontiers of the empire againſt the barbarians of the North; and in the performance of that laborious ſervice, their valour was exerciſed and their diſcipline confirmed. There appeared the ſame difference between the leaders as between the armies. Caprice or flattery had tempted Maxentius with the hopes of conqueſt; but theſe aſpiring hopes ſoon gave way to the habits of pleaſure and the conſciouſneſs of his inexperience. The intrepid mind of Conſtantine had been trained from his earlieſt youth to war, to action, and to military command. CHAP. XIV.

CHAP. XIV. Conſtantine paſſes the Alps.

When Hannibal marched from Gaul into Italy, he was obliged, firſt, to diſcover, and then to open, a way over mountains and through ſavage nations, that had never yielded a paſſage to a regular army [1]. The Alps were then guarded by nature, they are now fortified by art. Citadels conſtructed with no leſs skill than labour and expence, command every avenue into the plain, and on that ſide render Italy almoſt inacceſſible to the enemies of the king of Sardinia [2]. But in the courſe of the intermediate period, the generals, who have attempted the paſſage, have ſeldom experienced any difficulty or reſiſtance. In the age of Conſtantine, the peaſants of the mountains were civilized and obedient ſubjects; the country was plentifully ſtocked with proviſions, and the ſtupendous highways which the Romans had carried over the Alps, opened ſeveral communications between Gaul and Italy [3]. Conſtantine preferred the road of the Cottian Alps, or, as it is now called, of mount Cenis, and led his troops with ſuch active diligence, that he deſcended into the plain of Piedmont before the court of Maxentius had received any certain intelligence of his departure from the banks of the Rhine. The city of Suſa, however, which is ſituated at the foot of Mount Cenis, was ſurrounded with walls, and provided with a garriſon ſufficiently numerous to check the progreſs of an invader; but the impatience of Conſtantine's troops diſdained the tedious forms of a ſiege. The ſame day that

they appeared before Suſa, they applied fire to the gates, and ladders to the walls; and mounting to the aſſault amidſt a ſhower of ſtones and arrows, they entered the place ſword in hand, and cut in pieces the greateſt part of the garriſon. The flames were extinguiſhed by the care of Conſtantine, and the remains of Suſa preſerved from total deſtruction. About forty miles from thence, a more ſevere conteſt awaited him. A numerous army of Italians was aſſembled under the lieutenants of Maxentius in the plains of Turin. Its principal ſtrength conſiſted in a ſpecies of heavy cavalry, which the Romans, ſince the decline of their diſcipline, had borrowed from the nations of the Eaſt. The horſes, as well as the men, were clothed in complete armour, the joints of which were artfully adapted to the motions of their bodies. The aſpect of this cavalry was formidable, their weight almoſt irreſiſtible; and as, on this occaſion, their generals had drawn them up in a compact column or wedge, with a ſharp point, and with ſpreading flanks, they flattered themſelves that they ſhould eaſily break and trample down the army of Conſtantine. They might perhaps have ſucceeded in their deſign, had not their experienced adverſary embraced the ſame method of defence, which in ſimilar circumſtances had been practiſed by Aurelian. The ſkilful evolutions of Conſtantine divided and baffled this maſſy column of cavalry. The troops of Maxentius fled in confuſion towards Turin; and as the gates of the city were ſhut againſt them, very few eſcaped

Battle of Turin.

CHAP. XIV.

the ſword of the victorious purſuers. By this important ſervice, Turin deſerved to experience the clemency and even favour of the conqueror. He made his entry into the Imperial palace of Milan, and almoſt all the cities of Italy between the Alps and the Po not only acknowledged the power, but embraced with zeal the party, of Conſtantine [11].

Siege and battle of Verona.

From Milan to Rome, the Æmilian and Flaminian highways offered an eaſy march of about four hundred miles; but though Conſtantine was impatient to encounter the tyrant, he prudently directed his operations againſt another army of Italians, who, by their ſtrength and poſition, might either oppoſe his progreſs, or, in caſe of a misfortune, might intercept his retreat. Ruricius Pompeianus, a general diſtinguiſhed by his valour and ability, had under his command the city of Verona, and all the troops that were ſtationed in the province of Venetia. As ſoon as he was informed that Conſtantine was advancing towards him, he detached a large body of cavalry, which was defeated in an engagement near Breſcia, and purſued by the Gallic legions as far as the gates of Verona. The neceſſity, the importance, and the difficulties of the ſiege of Verona, immediately preſented themſelves to the ſagacious mind of Conſtantine [12]. The city was acceſſible only by a narrow peninſula towards the weſt, as the other three ſides were ſurrounded by the Adige, a rapid river which covered the province of Venetia, from whence the beſieged derived an inexhauſtible ſup-

ply of men and proviſions. It was not without great difficulty, and after ſeveral fruitleſs attempts, that Conſtantine found means to paſs the river at ſome diſtance above the city, and in a place where the torrent was leſs violent. He then encompaſſed Verona with ſtrong lines, puſhed his attacks with prudent vigour, and repelled a deſperate ſally of Pompeianus. That intrepid general, when he had uſed every means of defence that the ſtrength of the place or that of the garriſon could afford, ſecretly eſcaped from Verona, anxious not for his own but for the public ſafety. With indefatigable diligence he ſoon collected an army ſufficient either to meet Conſtantine in the field, or to attack him if he obſtinately remained within his lines. The emperor, attentive to the motions, and informed of the approach, of ſo formidable an enemy, left a part of his legions to continue the operations of the ſiege, whilſt; at the head of thoſe troops on whoſe valour and fidelity he more particularly depended, he advanced in perſon to engage the general of Maxentius. The army of Gaul was drawn up in two lines, according to the uſual practice of war; but their experienced leader, perceiving that the numbers of the Italians far exceeded his own, ſuddenly changed his diſpoſition, and reducing the ſecond, extended the front of his firſt line, to a juſt proportion with that of the enemy. Such evolutions, which only veteran troops can execute without confuſion in a moment of danger, commonly prove deciſive; but as this engagement began towards the

CHAP. XIV.

close of the day, and was contested with great obstinacy during the whole night, there was less room for the conduct of the generals than for the courage of the soldiers. The return of light displayed the victory of Constantine, and a field of carnage covered with many thousands of the vanquished Italians. Their general Pompeianus was found among the slain; Verona immediately surrendered at discretion, and the garrison was made prisoners of war [58]. When the officers of the victorious army congratulated their master on this important success, they ventured to add some respectful complaints, of such a nature, however, as the most jealous monarchs will listen to without displeasure. They represented to Constantine, that, not contented with performing all the duties of a commander, he had exposed his own person with an excess of valour which almost degenerated into rashness; and they conjured him for the future to pay more regard to the preservation of a life, in which the safety of Rome and of the empire was involved [59].

Indolence and fears of Maxentius.

While Constantine signalized his conduct and valour in the field, the sovereign of Italy appeared insensible of the calamities and danger of a civil war which raged in the heart of his dominions. Pleasure was still the only business of Maxentius. Concealing, or at least attempting to conceal, from the public knowledge the misfortunes of his arms [60], he indulged himself in a vain confidence, which deferred the remedies of the approaching evil, without deferring the evil it-

ſelf [11]. The rapid progreſs of Conſtantine [12] was ſcarcely ſufficient to awaken him from this fatal ſecurity; he flattered himſelf, that his well-known liberality, and the majeſty of the Roman name, which had already delivered him from two invaſions, would diſſipate with the ſame facility the rebellious army of Gaul. The officers of experience and ability, who had ſerved under the banners of Maximian, were at length compelled to inform his effeminate ſon of the imminent danger to which he was reduced; and, with a freedom that at once ſurpriſed and convinced him, to urge the neceſſity of preventing his ruin, by a vigorous exertion of his remaining power. The reſources of Maxentius, both of men and money, were ſtill conſiderable. The Prætorian guards felt how ſtrongly their own intereſt and ſafety were connected with his cauſe; and a third army was ſoon collected, more numerous than thoſe which had been loſt in the battles of Turin and Verona. It was far from the intention of the emperor to lead his troops in perſon. A ſtranger to the exerciſes of war, he trembled at the apprehenſion of ſo dangerous a conteſt; and as fear is commonly ſuperſtitious, he liſtened with melancholy attention to the rumours of omens and preſages which ſeemed to menace his life and empire. Shame at length ſupplied the place of courage, and forced him to take the field. He was unable to ſuſtain the contempt of the Roman people. The circus reſounded with their indignant clamours, and they tumultuously beſieged the gates of the palace, reproaching the puſillanimity

CHAP. XIV.

of their indolent ſovereign, and celebrating the heroic ſpirit of Conſtantine [63]. Before Maxentius left Rome, he conſulted the Sibylline books. The guardians of theſe ancient oracles were as well verſed in the arts of this world, as they were ignorant of the ſecrets of fate; and they returned him a very prudent anſwer, which might adapt itſelf to the event, and ſecure their reputation whatever ſhould be the chance of arms [64].

Victory of Conſtantine near Rome. A. D. 312. 28th Oct.

The celerity of Conſtantine's march has been compared to the rapid conqueſt of Italy by the firſt of the Cæſars; nor is the flattering parallel repugnant to the truth of hiſtory, ſince no more than fifty-eight days elapſed between the ſurrender of Verona and the final deciſion of the war. Conſtantine had always apprehended that the tyrant would conſult the dictates of fear, and perhaps of prudence; and that, inſtead of riſking his laſt hopes in a general engagement, he would ſhut himſelf up within the walls of Rome. His ample magazines ſecured him againſt the danger of famine; and as the ſituation of Conſtantine admitted not of delay, he might have been reduced to the ſad neceſſity of deſtroying with fire and ſword the Imperial city, the nobleſt reward of his victory, and the deliverance of which had been the motive, or rather indeed the pretence, of the civil war [65]. It was with equal ſurpriſe and pleaſure, that on his arrival at a place called Saxa Rubra, about nine miles from Rome [66], he diſcovered the army of Maxentius prepared to give him battle [67]. Their long front filled a very ſpacious plain, and their deep array reached to the banks of the Tyber,

which covered their rear, and forbade their retreat. We are informed, and we may believe, that Conſtantine diſpoſed his troops with conſummate skill, and that he choſe for himſelf the poſt of honour and danger. Diſtinguished by the ſplendour of his arms, he charged in perſon the cavalry of his rival; and his irreſiſtible attack determined the fortune of the day. The cavalry of Maxentius was principally compoſed either of unwieldy cuiraſſiers, or of light Moors and Numidians. They yielded to the vigour of the Gallic horſe, which poſſeſſed more activity than the one, more firmneſs than the other. The defeat of the two wings left the infantry without any protection on its flanks, and the undiſciplined Italians fled without reluctance from the ſtandard of a tyrant whom they had always hated, and whom they no longer feared. The Prætorians, conſcious that their offences were beyond the reach of mercy, were animated by revenge and deſpair. Notwithſtanding their repeated efforts, thoſe brave veterans were unable to recover the victory: they obtained, however, an honourable death; and it was obſerved, that their bodies covered the ſame ground which had been occupied by their ranks [88]. The confuſion then became general, and the diſmayed troops of Maxentius, purſued by an implacable enemy, rushed by thouſands into the deep and rapid ſtream of the Tyber. The emperor himſelf attempted to eſcape back into the city over the Milvian bridge, but the crowds which preſſed together through that narrow paſſage, forced him

CHAP. XIV.

CHAP. XIV.

into the river, where he was immediately drowned by the weight of his armour [69]. His body, which had ſunk very deep into the mud, was found with ſome difficulty the next day. The ſight of his head, when it was expoſed to the eyes of the people, convinced them of their deliverance, and admoniſhed them to receive, with acclamations of loyalty and gratitude, the fortunate Conſtantine, who thus atchieved by his valour and ability the moſt ſplendid enterpriſe of his life [70].

His reception.

In the uſe of victory, Conſtantine neither deſerved the praiſe of clemency, nor incurred the cenſure of immoderate rigour [71]. He inflicted the ſame treatment, to which a defeat would have expoſed his own perſon and family, put to death the two ſons of the tyrant, and carefully extirpated his whole race. The moſt diſtinguiſhed adherents of Maxentius muſt have expected to ſhare his fate, as they had ſhared his proſperity and his crimes; but when the Roman people loudly demanded a greater number of victims, the conqueror reſiſted, with firmneſs and humanity, thoſe ſervile clamours which were dictated by flattery as well as by reſentment. Informers were puniſhed and diſcouraged; the innocent, who had ſuffered under the late tyranny, were recalled from exile, and reſtored to their eſtates. A general act of oblivion quieted the minds and ſettled the property of the people, both in Italy and in Africa [72]. The firſt time that Conſtantine honoured the ſenate with his preſence, he recapitulated his own ſervices and exploits in a modeſt oration, aſſured that illuſtrious

rious order of his ſincere regard, and promiſed to re-eſtabliſh its ancient dignity and privileges. The grateful ſenate repaid theſe unmeaning profeſſions by the empty titles of honour, which it was yet in their power to beſtow; and without preſuming to ratify the authority of Conſtantine, they paſſed a decree to aſſign him the firſt rank among the three *Auguſti* who governed the Roman world [73]. Games and feſtivals were inſtituted to preſerve the fame of his victory, and ſeveral edifices raiſed at the expence of Maxentius, were dedicated to the honour of his ſucceſsful rival. The triumphal arch of Conſtantine ſtill remains a melancholy proof of the decline of the arts, and a ſingular teſtimony of the meaneſt vanity. As it was not poſſible to find in the capital of the empire, a ſculptor who was capable of adorning that public monument; the arch of Trajan, without any reſpect either for his memory or for the rules of propriety, was ſtripped of its moſt elegant figures. The difference of times and perſons, of actions and characters, was totally diſregarded. The Parthian captives appear proſtrate at the feet of a prince who never carried his arms beyond the Euphrates; and curious antiquarians can ſtill diſcover the head of Trajan on the trophies of Conſtantine. The new ornaments which it was neceſſary to introduce between the vacancies of ancient ſculpture, are executed in the rudeſt and moſt unskilful manner [74].

CHAP. XIV.

The final abolition of the Prætorian guards was a meaſure of prudence as well as of revenge. Thoſe haughty troops, whoſe numbers and privileges

and conduct at Rome.

CHAP. XIV.

had been reſtored, and even augmented, by Maxentius, were for ever ſuppreſſed by Conſtantine. Their fortified camp was deſtroyed, and the few Prætorians who had eſcaped the fury of the ſword, were diſperſed among the legions, and baniſhed to the frontiers of the empire, where they might be ſerviceable without again becoming dangerous[75]. By ſuppreſſing the troops which were uſually ſtationed in Rome, Conſtantine gave the fatal blow to the dignity of the ſenate and people, and the diſarmed capital was expoſed without protection to the inſults or neglect of its diſtant maſter. We may obſerve, that in this laſt effort to preſerve their expiring freedom, the Romans, from the apprehenſion of a tribute, had raiſed Maxentius to the throne. He exacted that tribute from the ſenate under the name of a free gift. They implored the aſſiſtance of Conſtantine. He vanquiſhed the tyrant, and converted the free gift into a perpetual tax. The ſenators, according to the declaration which was required of their property, were divided into ſeveral claſſes. The moſt opulent paid annually eight pounds of gold, the next claſs paid four, the laſt two, and thoſe whoſe poverty might have claimed an exemption, were aſſeſſed however at ſeven pieces of gold. Beſides the regular members of the ſenate, their ſons, their deſcendants, and even their relations, enjoyed the vain privileges, and ſupported the heavy burdens, of the ſenatorial order; nor will it any longer excite our ſurpriſe, that Conſtantine ſhould be attentive to increaſe the number of perſons who

were included under so useful a description [76]. After the defeat of Maxentius, the victorious emperor passed no more than two or three months in Rome, which he visited twice during the remainder of his life, to celebrate the solemn festivals of the tenth and of the twentieth years of his reign. Constantine was almost perpetually in motion to exercise the legions, or to inspect the state of the provinces. Treves, Milan, Aquileia, Sirmium, Naissus, and Thessalonica, were the occasional places of his residence, till he founded a NEW ROME on the confines of Europe and Asia [77].

CHAP. XIV.

His alliance with Licinius. A. D. 313. March.

Before Constantine marched into Italy, he had secured the friendship, or at least the neutrality, of Licinius, the Illyrian emperor. He had promised his sister Constantia in marriage to that prince; but the celebration of the nuptials was deferred till after the conclusion of the war, and the interview of the two emperors at Milan, which was appointed for that purpose, appeared to cement the union of their families and interests [78]. In the midst of the public festivity they were suddenly obliged to take leave of each other. An inroad of the Franks summoned Constantine to the Rhine, and the hostile approach of the sovereign of Asia demanded the immediate presence of Licinius. Maximin had been the secret ally of Maxentius, and without being discouraged by his fate, he resolved to try the fortune of a civil war. He moved out of Syria towards the frontiers of Bithynia in the depth of winter. The season

War between Maximin and Licinius. A. D. 313.

CHAP. XIV.

was ſevere and tempeſtuous; great numbers of men as well as horſes periſhed in the ſnow; and as the roads were broken up by inceſſant rains, he was obliged to leave behind him a conſiderable part of the heavy baggage, which was unable to follow the rapidity of his forced marches. By this extraordinary effort of diligence, he arrived with a haraſſed but formidable army, on the banks of the Thracian Boſphorus, before the lieutenants of Licinius were appriſed of his hoſtile intentions. Byzantium ſurrendered to the power of Maximin, after a ſiege of eleven days. He was detained ſome days under the walls of Heraclea; and he had no ſooner taken poſſeſſion of that city, than he was alarmed by the intelligence, that Licinius had pitched his camp at the diſtance of only eighteen miles. After a fruitleſs negociation, in which the two princes attempted to ſeduce the fidelity of each other's adherents, they had recourſe to arms. The emperor of the Eaſt commanded a diſciplined and veteran army of above ſeventy thouſand men, and Licinius, who had collected about thirty thouſand Illyrians, was at firſt oppreſſed by the ſuperiority of numbers. His military ſkill, and the firmneſs of his troops, reſtored the day, and obtained a deciſive victory. The incredible ſpeed which Maximin exerted in his flight, is much more celebrated than his proweſs in the battle. Twenty-four hours afterwards he was ſeen pale, trembling, and without his Imperial ornaments, at Nicomedia, one hundred and ſixty miles from the place of his defeat. The wealth of Aſia was

The defeat, April 30,

CHAP. XIV.

yet unexhauſted; and though the flower of his veterans had fallen in the late action, he had ſtill power, if he could obtain time, to draw very numerous levies from Syria and Egypt. But he ſurvived his misfortune only three or four months. His death, which happened at Tarſus, was variously aſcribed to deſpair, to poiſon, and to the divine juſtice. As Maximin was alike deſtitute of abilities and of virtue, he was lamented neither by the people nor by the ſoldiers. The provinces of the Eaſt, delivered from the terrors of civil war, cheerfully acknowledged the authority of Licinius [77].

and death of the former. Auguſt.

The vanquished emperor left behind him two children, a boy of about eight, and a girl of about ſeven, years old. Their inoffenſive age might have excited compaſſion; but the compaſſion of Licinius was a very feeble reſource, nor did it reſtrain him from *extinguiſhing* the name and memory of his adverſary. The death of Severianus will admit of leſs excuſe, as it was dictated neither by revenge nor by policy. The conqueror had never received any injury from the father of that unhappy youth, and the ſhort and obſcure reign of Severus in a diſtant part of the empire was already forgotten. But the execution of Candidianus was an act of the blackeſt cruelty and ingratitude. He was the natural ſon of Galerius, the friend and benefactor of Licinius. The prudent father had judged him too young to ſuſtain the weight of a diadem; but he hoped that under the protection of princes, who were indebted to his

Cruelty of Licinius.

CHAP. XIV.

favour for the Imperial purple, Candidianus might paſs a ſecure and honourable life. He was now advancing towards the twentieth year of his age, and the royalty of his birth, though unſupported either by merit or ambition, was ſufficient to exaſperate the jealous mind of Licinius [40]. To theſe innocent and illuſtrious victims of his tyranny, we muſt add the wife and daughter of the emperor Diocletian. When that prince conferred on Galerius the title of Cæſar, he had given him in marriage his daughter Valeria, whoſe melancholy adventures might furnish a very ſingular ſubject for tragedy. She had fulfilled and even ſurpaſſed the duties of a wife. As ſhe had not any children herſelf, ſhe condeſcended to adopt the illegitimate ſon of her husband, and invariably diſplayed towards the unhappy Candidianus the tenderneſs and anxiety of a real mother. After the death of Galerius, her ample poſſeſſions provoked the avarice, and her perſonal attractions excited the deſires, of his ſucceſſor Maximin [41]. He had a wife ſtill alive, but divorce was permitted by the Roman law, and the fierce paſſions of the tyrant demanded an immediate gratification. The anſwer of Valeria was ſuch as became the daughter and widow of emperors; but it was tempered by the prudence which her defenceleſs condition compelled her to obſerve. She repreſented to the perſons whom Maximin had employed on this occaſion, „ that even if honour could permit a woman of „ her character and dignity to entertain a thought „ of ſecond nuptials, decency at leaſt muſt forbid

Unfortunate fate of the empreſs Valeria and her mother.

„ her to liſten to his addreſſes at a time when the CHAP. XIV.
„ aſhes of her huſband and his benefactor were
„ ſtill warm; and while the ſorrows of her mind
„ were ſtill expreſſed by her mourning garments,
„ She ventured to declare, that ſhe could place
„ very little confidence in the profeſſions of a
„ man, whoſe cruel inconſtancy was capable of
„ repudiating a faithful and affectionate wife [11]. "
On this repulſe, the love of Maximin was converted into fury, and as witneſſes and judges were always at his diſpoſal, it was eaſy for him to cover his fury with an appearance of legal proceedings, and to aſſault the reputation as well as the happineſs of Valeria. Her eſtates were confiſcated, her eunuchs and domeſtics devoted to the moſt inhuman tortures, and ſeveral innocent and reſpectable matrons, who were honoured with her friendſhip, ſuffered death, on a falſe accuſation of adultery. The empreſs herſelf, together with her mother Priſca, was condemned to exile; and as they were ignominiously hurried from place to place before they were confined to a ſequeſtered village in the deſerts of Syria, they expoſed their ſhame and diſtreſs to the provinces of the Eaſt, which, during thirty years, had reſpected their auguſt dignity. Diocletian made ſeveral ineffectual efforts to alleviate the misfortunes of his daughter; and, as the laſt return that he expected for the Imperial purple, which he had conferred upon Maximin, he entreated that Valeria might be permitted to ſhare his retirement of Salona, and to cloſe the eyes of her afflicted father [12]. He

CHAP. XIV.

entreated, but as he could no longer threaten, his prayers were received with coldneſs and diſdain; and the pride of Maximin was gratified, in treating Diocletian as a ſuppliant, and his daughter as a criminal. The death of Maximin ſeemed to aſſure the empreſſes of a favourable alteration in their fortune. The public diſorders relaxed the vigilance of their guard, and they eaſily found means to eſcape from the place of their exile, and to repair, though with ſome precaution, and in diſguiſe, to the court of Licinius. His behaviour, in the firſt days of his reign, and the honourable reception which he gave to young Candidianus, inſpired Valeria with a ſecret ſatisfaction, both on her own account, and on that of her adopted ſon. But theſe grateful proſpects were ſoon ſucceeded by horrour and aſtonishment, and the bloody executions which ſtained the palace of Nicomedia, ſufficiently convinced her, that the throne of Maximin was filled by a tyrant more inhuman than himſelf. Valeria conſulted her ſafety by a haſty flight, and, ſtill accompanied by her mother Priſca, they wandered above fifteen months [*] through the provinces, concealed in the diſguiſe of plebeian habits. They were at length diſcovered at Theſſalonica; and as the ſentence of their death was already pronounced, they were immediately beheaded, and their bodies thrown into the ſea. The people gazed on the melancholy ſpectacle; but their grief and indignation were ſuppreſſed by the terrors of a military guard. Such was the unworthy fate of the wife and daughter of Dio-

cletian. We lament their misfortunes, we cannot discover their crimes, and whatever idea we may justly entertain of the cruelty of Licinius, it remains a matter of surprise, that he was not contented with some more secret and decent method of revenge [55].

CHAP. XIV.

The Roman world was now divided between Constantine and Licinius, the former of whom was master of the West, and the latter of the East. It might perhaps have been expected that the conquerors, fatigued with civil war, and connected by a private as well as public alliance, would have renounced, or at least would have suspended, any farther designs of ambition. And yet a year had scarcely elapsed after the death of Maximin, before the victorious emperors turned their arms against each other. The genius, the success, and the aspiring temper, of Constantine, may seem to mark him out as the aggressor; but the perfidious character of Licinius justifies the most unfavourable suspicions, and by the faint light which history reflects on this transaction [56], we may discover a conspiracy fomented by his arts against the authority of his colleague. Constantine had lately given his sister Anastasia in marriage to Bassianus, a man of a considerable family and fortune, and had elevated his new kinsman to the rank of Cæsar. According to the system of government instituted by Diocletian, Italy, and perhaps Africa, were designed for his department in the empire. But the performance of the promised favour was either at-

Quarrel between Constantine and Licinius. A. D. 314.

CHAP. XIV.

tended with so much delay, or accompanied with so many unequal conditions, that the fidelity of Bassianus was alienated rather than secured by the honourable distinction which he had obtained. His nomination had been ratified by the consent of Licinius, and that artful prince, by the means of his emissaries, soon contrived to enter into a secret and dangerous correspondence with the new Cæsar, to irritate his discontents, and to urge him to the rash enterprise of extorting by violence what he might in vain solicit from the justice of Constantine. But the vigilant emperor discovered the conspiracy before it was ripe for execution; and, after solemnly renouncing the alliance of Bassianus, despoiled him of the purple, and inflicted the deserved punishment on his treason and ingratitude. The haughty refusal of Licinius, when he was required to deliver up the criminals, who had taken refuge in his dominions, confirmed the suspicions already entertained of his perfidy; and the indignities offered at Æmona, on the frontiers of Italy, to the statues of Constantine, became the signal of discord between the two princes [87].

First civil war between them.

Battle of Cibalis. A. D. 315. 8th Oct.

The first battle was fought near Cibalis, a city of Pannonia, situated on the river Save, about fifty miles above Sirmium [88]. From the inconsiderable forces which in this important contest two such powerful monarchs brought into the field, it may be inferred, that the one was suddenly provoked, and that the other was unexpectedly surprised. The emperor of the West

had only twenty thouſand, and the ſovereign of the Eaſt no more than five and thirty thouſand men. The inferiority of number was, however, compenſated by the advantage of the ground. Conſtantine had taken poſt in a defile about half a mile in breadth, between a ſteep hill and a deep moraſs, and in that ſituation he ſteadily expected and repulſed the firſt attack of the enemy. He purſued his ſucceſs, and advanced into the plain. But the veteran legions of Illyricum rallied under the ſtandard of a leader who had been trained to arms in the ſchool of Probus and Diocletian. The miſſile weapons on both ſides were ſoon exhauſted; the two armies, with equal valour, rushed to a cloſer engagement of ſwords and ſpears, and the doubtful conteſt had already laſted from the dawn of the day to a late hour of the evening, when the right wing, which Conſtantine led in perſon, made a vigorous and deciſive charge. The judicious retreat of Licinius ſaved the remainder of his troops from a total defeat; but when he computed his loſs, which amounted to more than twenty thouſand men, he thought it unſafe to paſs the night in the preſence of an active and victorious enemy. Abandoning his camp and magazines, he marched away with ſecrecy and diligence at the head of the greateſt part of his cavalry, and was ſoon removed beyond the danger of a purſuit. His diligence preſerved his wife, his ſon, and his treaſures, which he had depoſited at Sirmium. Licinius paſſed through that city, and breaking down the

CHAP. XIV.

CHAP. XIV.

bridge on the Save, haſtened to collect a new army in Dacia and Thrace. In his flight he beſtowed the precarious title of Cæſar on Valens, his general of the Illyrian frontier [*].

Battle of Mardia.

The plain of Mardia in Thrace was the theatre of a ſecond battle no leſs obſtinate and bloody than the former. The troops on both ſides diſplayed the ſame valour and diſcipline; and the victory was once more decided by the ſuperior abilities of Conſtantine, who directed a body of five thouſand men to gain an advantageous height, from whence, during the heat of the action, they attacked the rear of the enemy, and made a very conſiderable ſlaughter. The troops of Licinius, however, preſenting a double front, ſtill maintained their ground, till the approach of night put an end to the combat, and ſecured their retreat towards the mountains of Macedonia [*]. The loſs of two battles, and of his braveſt veterans, reduced the fierce ſpirit of Licinius to ſue for peace. His ambaſſador Miſtrianus was admitted to the audience of Conſtantine; he expatiated on the common topics of moderation and humanity, which are ſo familiar to the eloquence of the vanquiſhed; repreſented, in the moſt inſinuating language, that the event of the war was ſtill doubtful, whilſt its inevitable calamities were alike pernicious to both the contending parties, and declared, that he was authoriſed to propoſe a laſting and honourable peace in the name of the *two* emperors his maſters. Conſtantine received the mention of Va-

lens with indignation and contempt. "It was CHAP. XIV.
„ not for such a purpose," he sternly replied,
„ that we have advanced from the shores of the
„ western ocean in an uninterrupted course of
„ combats and victories, that, after rejecting an
„ ungrateful kinsman, we should accept for our
„ colleague a contemptible slave. The abdication
„ of Valens is the first article of the treaty".„
It was necessary to accept this humiliating condition, and the unhappy Valens, after a reign of a few days, was deprived of the purple and of his life. As soon as this obstacle was removed, the tranquillity of the Roman world was easily restored. The successive defeats of Licinius had ruined his forces, but they had displayed his courage and abilities. His situation was almost desperate, but the efforts of despair are sometimes formidable; and the good sense of Constantine preferred a great and certain advantage to a third trial of the chance of arms. He consented to leave his rival, or, as he again styled Licinius, his friend and brother, in the possession of Thrace, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt; but the provinces of Pannonia, Dalmatia, Dacia, Macedonia, and Greece, were yielded to the western empire, and the dominions of Constantine now extended from the confines of Caledonia to the extremity of Peloponnesus. It was stipulated by the same treaty, that three royal youths, the sons of the emperors, should be called to the hopes of the succession. Crispus and the young Constantine were soon afterwards declared

Treaty of peace. December.

CHAP. XIV.

Cæſars in the Weſt, while the younger Licinius was inveſted with the ſame dignity in the Eaſt. In this double proportion of honours, the conqueror aſſerted the ſuperiority of his arms and power [94].

General peace and laws of Conſtantine. A. D. 315—323.

The reconciliation of Conſtantine and Licinius, though it was embittered by reſentment and jealouſy, by the remembrance of recent injuries, and by the apprehenſion of future dangers, maintained, however, above eight years, the tranquillity of the Roman world. As a very regular ſeries of the Imperial laws commences about this period, it would not be difficult to tranſcribe the civil regulations which employed the leiſure of Conſtantine. But the moſt important of his inſtitutions are intimately connected with the new ſyſtem of policy and religion, which was not perfectly eſtabliſhed till the laſt and peaceful years of his reign. There are many of his laws, which, as far as they concern the rights and property of individuals, and the practice of the bar, are more properly referred to the private than to the public juriſprudence of the empire; and he publiſhed many edicts of ſo local and temporary a nature, that they would ill deſerve the notice of a general hiſtory. Two laws, however, may be ſelected from the crowd; the one, for its importance, the other, for its ſingularity; the former for its remarkable benevolence, the latter for its exceſſive ſeverity. 1. The horrid practice, ſo familiar to the ancients, of expoſing or murdering their new-born infants, was be-

come every day more frequent in the provinces, and especially in Italy. It was the effect of distress; and the distress was principally occasioned by the intolerable burden of taxes, and by the vexatious as well as cruel prosecutions of the officers of the revenue against their insolvent debtors. The less opulent or less industrious part of mankind, instead of rejoicing in an increase of family, deemed it an act of paternal tenderness to release their children from the impending miseries of a life which they themselves were unable to support. The humanity of Constantine, moved, perhaps, by some recent and extraordinary instances of despair, engaged him to address an edict to all the cities of Italy, and afterwards of Africa, directing immediate and sufficient relief to be given to those parents who should produce, before the magistrates, the children whom their own poverty would not allow them to educate. But the promise was too liberal, and the provision too vague, to effect any general or permanent benefit [93]. The law, though it may merit some praise, served rather to display than to alleviate the public distress. It still remains an authentic monument, to contradict and confound those venal orators, who were too well satisfied with their own situation to discover either vice or misery under the government of a generous sovereign [94]. 2. The laws of Constantine against rapes were dictated with very little indulgence, for the most amiable weaknesses of human nature; since the description of that

CHAP. XIV.

crime was applied not only to the brutal violence which compelled, but even to the gentle seduction which might perſuade, an unmarried woman, under the age of twenty-five, to leave the houſe of her parents. "The ſucceſsful raviſher „ was puniſhed with death; and as if ſimple „ death was inadequate to the enormity of his „ guilt, he was either burnt alive, or torn in „ pieces by wild beaſts in the amphitheatre. „ The virgin's declaration that ſhe had been car- „ ried away with her own conſent, inſtead of „ ſaving her lover, expoſed her to ſhare his fate. „ The duty of a public proſecution was intruſted „ to the parents of the guilty or unfortunate „ maid; and if the ſentiments of Nature pre- „ vailed on them to diſſemble the injury, and „ to repair by a ſubſequent marriage the honour „ of their family, they were themſelves puniſhed „ by exile and confiſcation. The ſlaves, whether- „ er male or female, who were convicted of „ having been acceſſary to the rape or ſeduction, „ were burnt alive, or put to death by the in- „ genious torture of pouring down their throats „ a quantity of melted lead. As the crime was „ of a public kind, the accuſation was permitted „ even to ſtrangers. The commencement of „ the action was not limited to any term of „ years, and the conſequences of the ſentence „ were extended to the innocent offſpring of „ ſuch an irregular union". But whenever the offence inſpires leſs horror than the puniſhment, the rigour of penal law is obliged to give way

way to the common feelings of mankind. The most odious parts of this edict were softened or repealed in the subsequent reigns [*]; and even Constantine himself very frequently alleviated, by partial acts of mercy, the stern temper of his general institutions. Such, indeed, was the singular humour of that emperor, who shewed himself as indulgent, and even remiss, in the execution of his laws, as he was severe, and even cruel, in the enacting of them. It is scarcely possible to observe a more decisive symptom of weakness, either in the character of the prince, or in the constitution of the government [*]. CHAP. XIV.

The civil administration was sometimes interrupted by the military defence of the empire. Crispus, a youth of the most amiable character, who had received with the title of Cæsar the command of the Rhine, distinguished his conduct, as well as valour, in several victories over the Franks and Alemanni; and taught the barbarians of that frontier to dread the eldest son of Constantine, and the grandson of Constantius [*]. The emperor himself had assumed the more difficult and important province of the Danube. The Goths, who in the time of Claudius and Aurelian had felt the weight of the Roman arms, respected the power of the empire, even in the midst of its intestine divisions. But the strength of that warlike nation was now restored by a peace of near fifty years; a new generation had arisen, who no longer remembered the misfortunes of ancient days: the Sarmatians of the lake The Gothic war. A. D. 322.

CHAP. XIV.

Mœotis followed the Gothic ſtandard either as ſubjects or as allies, and their united force was poured upon the countries of Illyricum. Campona, Margus, and Bononia, appear to have been the ſcenes of ſeveral memorable ſieges and battles [99]; and though Conſtantine encountered a very obſtinate reſiſtance, he prevailed at length in the conteſt, and the Goths were compelled to purchaſe an ignominious retreat, by reſtoring the booty and priſoners which they had taken Nor was this advantage ſufficient to ſatisfy the indignation of the emperor. He reſolved to chaſtiſe as well as to repulſe the inſolent barbarians who had dared to invade the territories of Rome. At the head of his legions he paſſed the Danube, after repairing the bridge which had been conſtructed by Trajan, penetrated into the ſtrongeſt receſſes of Dacia [100], and when he had inflicted a ſevere revenge, condeſcended to give peace to the ſuppliant Goths, on condition that, as often as they were required, they ſhould ſupply his armies with a body of forty thouſand ſoldiers [101]. Exploits like theſe were no doubt honourable to Conſtantine, and beneficial to the ſtate; but it may ſurely be queſtioned, whether they can juſtify the exaggerated aſſertion of Euſebius, that ALL SCYTHIA, as far as the extremity of the North, divided as it was into ſo many names and nations of the moſt various and ſavage manners, had been added by his victorious arms to the Roman empire [102].

CHAP. XIV. Second civil war between Constantine and Licinius. A. D. 323.

In this exalted state of glory it was impossible that Constantine should any longer endure a partner in the empire. Confiding in the superiority of his genius and military power, he determined, without any previous injury, to exert them for the destruction of Licinius, whose advanced age and unpopular vices seemed to offer a very easy conquest [103]. But the old emperor, awakened by the approaching danger, deceived the expectations of his friends as well as of his enemies. Calling forth that spirit and those abilities by which he had deserved the friendship of Galerius and the Imperial purple, he prepared himself for the contest, collected the forces of the East, and soon filled the plains of Hadrianople with his troops, and the Streights of the Hellespont with his fleet. The army consisted of one hundred and fifty thousand foot, and fifteen thousand horse; and as the cavalry was drawn, for the most part, from Phrygia and Cappadocia, we may conceive a more favourable opinion of the beauty of the horses, than of the courage and dexterity of their riders. The fleet was composed of three hundred and fifty gallies of three ranks of oars. An hundred and thirty of these were furnished by Egypt, and the adjacent coast of Africa. An hundred and ten sailed from the ports of Phœnicia and the isle of Cyprus; and the maritime countries of Bithynia, Ionia, and Caria, were likewise obliged to provide an hundred and ten gallies. The troops of Constantine were ordered to rendezvous at Thes-

CHAP. XIV.

salonica; they amounted to above an hundred and twenty thousand horse and foot [104]. Their emperor was satisfied with their martial appearance, and his army contained more soldiers, though fewer men, than that of his eastern competitor. The legions of Constantine were levied in the warlike provinces of Europe; action had confirmed their discipline, victory had elevated their hopes, and there were among them a great number of veterans, who, after seventeen glorious campaigns under the same leader, prepared themselves to deserve an honourable dismission by a last effort of their valour [105]. But the naval preparations of Constantine were in every respect much inferior to those of Licinius. The maritime cities of Greece sent their respective quotas of men and ships to the celebrated harbour of Piræus, and their united forces consisted of no more than two hundred small vessels: a very feeble armament, if it is compared with those formidable fleets which were equipped and maintained by the republic of Athens during the Peloponnesian war [106]. Since Italy was no longer the seat of government, the naval establishments of Misenum and Ravenna had been gradually neglected; and as the shipping and mariners of the empire were supported by commerce rather than by war, it was natural that they should the most abound in the industrious provinces of Egypt and Asia. It is only surprising that the eastern emperor, who possessed so great a superiority at sea, should have neglected the oppor-

tunity of carrying an offenſive war into the centre of his rival's dominions.

CHAP. XIV.

Inſtead of embracing ſuch an active reſolution, which might have changed the whole face of the war, the prudent Licinius expected the aproach of his rival in a camp near Hadrianople, which he had fortified with an anxious care that betrayed his apprehenſion of the event. Conſtantine directed his march from Theſſalonica towards that part of Thrace, till he found himſelf ſtopped by the broad and rapid ſtream of the Hebrus, and diſcovered the numerous army of Licinius, which filled the ſteep aſcent of the hill, from the river to the city of Hadrianople. Many days were ſpent in doubtful and diſtant skirmishes; but at length the obſtacles of the paſſage and of the attack were removed by the intrepid conduct of Conſtantine. In this place we might relate a wonderful exploit of Conſtantine, which, though it can ſcarcely be paralleled either in poetry or romance, is celebrated, not by a venal orator devoted to his fortune, but by an hiſtorian, the partial enemy of his fame. We are aſſured that the valiant emperor threw himſelf into the river Hebrus, accompanied only by *twelve* horſemen, and that by the effort or terror of his invincible arm, he broke, ſlaughtered, and put to flight a hoſt of an hundred and fifty thouſand men. The credulity of Zoſimus prevailed ſo ſtrongly over his paſſion, that among the events of the memorable battle of Hadrianople, he ſeems to have ſelected and embellished, not the moſt important, but the moſt marvellous.

Battle of Hadrianople. A. D. 323. July 3.

CHAP. XIV.

The valour and danger of Conſtantine are atteſted by a ſlight wound which he received in the thigh, but it may be diſcovered even from an imperfect narration, and perhaps a corrupted text, that the victory was obtained no leſs by the conduct of the general than by the courage of the hero; that a body of five thouſand archers marched round to occupy a thick wood in the rear of the enemy, whoſe attention was diverted by the conſtruction of a bridge, and that Licinius, perplexed by ſo many artful evolutions, was reluctantly drawn from his advantageous poſt to combat on equal ground in the plain. The conteſt was no longer equal. His confuſed multitude of new levies was eaſily vanquiſhed by the experienced veterans of the Weſt. Thirty-four thouſand men are reported to have been ſlain. The fortified camp of Licinius was taken by aſſault the evening of the battle; the greater part of the fugitives, who had retired to the mountains, ſurrendered themſelves the next day to the diſcretion of the conqueror; and his rival, who could no longer keep the field, confined himſelf within the walls of Byzantium [17].

Siege of Byzantium, and naval victory of Criſpus.

The ſiege of Byzantium, which was immediately undertaken by Conſtantine, was attended with great labour and uncertainty. In the late civil wars, the fortifications of that place, ſo juſtly conſidered as the key of Europe and Aſia, had been repaired and ſtrengthened; and as long as Licinius remained maſter of the ſea, the garriſon was much leſs expoſed to the danger of famine than the army of the beſiegers. The naval commanders

of Conſtantine were ſummoned to his camp, and received his poſitive orders to force the paſſage of the Helleſpont, as the fleet of Licinius, inſtead of ſeeking and deſtroying their feeble enemy, continued inactive in thoſe narrow ſtreights where its ſuperiority of numbers was of little uſe or advantage. Criſpus, the emperor's eldeſt ſon, was intruſted with the execution of this daring enterpriſe, which he performed with ſo much courage and ſucceſs, that he deſerved the eſteem, and moſt probably excited the jealouſy, of his father. The engagement laſted two days, and in the evening of the firſt, the contending fleets, after a conſiderable and mutual loſs, retired into their reſpective harbours of Europe and Aſia. The ſecond day about noon a ſtrong ſouth wind [101] ſprang up, which carried the veſſels of Criſpus againſt the enemy, and as the caſual advantage was improved by his skilful intrepidity, he ſoon obtained a complete victory. An hundred and thirty veſſels were deſtroyed, five thouſand men were ſlain, and Amandus, the admiral of the Aſiatic fleet, eſcaped with the utmoſt difficulty to the ſhores of Chalcedon. As ſoon as the Helleſpont was open, a plentiful convoy of proviſions flowed into the camp of Conſtantine, who had already advanced the operations of the ſiege He conſtructed artificial mounds of earth of an equal height with the ramparts of Byzantium. The lofty towers which were erected on that foundation, galled the beſieged with large ſtones and darts from the military engines, and the battering rams

CHAP. XIV.

CHAP. XIV.

had shaken the walls in several places. If Licinius persisted much longer in the defence, he exposed himself to be involved in the ruin, of the place. Before he was surrounded he prudently removed his person and treasures to Chalcedon in Asia; and as he was always desirous of associating companions to the hopes and dangers of his fortune, he now bestowed the title of Cæsar on Martinianus, who exercised one of the most important offices of the empire [109].

Battle of Chrysopolis.

Such were still the resources, and such the abilities, of Licinius, that, after so many successive defeats, he collected in Bithynia a new army of fifty or sixty thousand men, while the activity of Constantine was employed in the siege of Byzantium. The vigilant emperor did not however neglect the last struggles of his antagonist. A considerable part of his victorious army was transported over the Bosphorus in small vessels, and the decisive engagement was fought soon after their landing on the heights of Chrysopolis, or, as it is now called, of Scutary. The troops of Licinius, though they were lately raised, ill armed, and worse disciplined, made head against their conquerors with fruitless but desperate valour, till a total defeat and the slaughter of five and twenty thousand men irretrievably determined the fate of their leader [110]. He retired to Nicomedia, rather with the view of gaining some time for negotiation, than with the hope of any effectual defence. Constantia, his wife and the sister of Constantine, interceded with her brother in favour of her hus-

Submission and death of Licinius.

band, and obtained from his policy rather than from his compaſſion, a ſolemn promiſe, confirmed by an oath, that after the ſacrifice of Martinianus, and the reſignation of the purple, Licinius himſelf ſhould be permitted to paſs the remainder of his life in peace and affluence. The behaviour of Conſtantia, and her relation to the contending parties, naturally recalls the remembrance of that virtuous matron who was the ſiſter of Auguſtus, and the wife of Antony. But the temper of mankind was altered, and it was no longer eſteemed infamous for a Roman to ſurvive his honour and independence. Licinius ſolicited and accepted the pardon of his offences, laid himſelf and his purple at the feet of his *lord* and *maſter*, was raiſed from the ground with inſulting pity, was admitted the ſame day to the Imperial banquet, and ſoon afterwards was ſent away to Theſſalonica, which had been choſen for the place of his confinement [111]. His confinement was ſoon terminated by death; and it is doubtful whether a tumult of the ſoldiers, or a decree of the ſenate, was ſuggeſted as a motive for his execution. According to the rules of tyranny, he was accuſed of forming a conſpiracy, and of holding a treaſonable correſpondence with the barbarians; but as he was never convicted, either by his own conduct or by any legal evidence, we may perhaps be allowed, from his weakneſs, to preſume his innocence [112]. The memory of Licinius was branded with infamy, his ſtatues were thrown down, and, by a haſty edict, of ſuch miſchievous tendency that it was

CHAP. XIV.

CHAP. XIV.

almoſt immediately corrected, all his laws, and all the judicial proceedings of his reign, were at once abolished [113]. By this victory of Conſtantine, the Roman world was again united under the authority of one emperor, thirty-ſeven years after Diocletian had divided his power and provinces with his aſſociate Maximian.

Re-union of the empire. A. D. 324.

The ſucceſſive ſteps of the elevation of Conſtantine, from his firſt aſſuming the purple at York, to the reſignation of Licinius at Nicomedia, have been related with ſome minuteneſs and preciſion, not only as the events are in themſelves both intereſting and important, but ſtill more, as they contributed to the decline of the empire by the expence of blood and treaſure, and by the perpetual increaſe, as well of the taxes, as of the military eſtabliſhment. The foundation of Conſtantinople, and the eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian religion, were the immediate and memorable conſequences of this revolution.

CHAP. XV.

The Progreſs of the Chriſtian religion, and the Sentiments, Manners, Numbers, and Condition, of the primitive Chriſtians.

CHAP. XV.

Importance of the inquiry.

A CANDID but rational inquiry into the progreſs and eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity, may be conſidered as a very eſſential part of the hiſtory of the Roman empire. While that great body was invaded by open violence, or undermined by ſlow decay, a pure and humble religion gently inſinuated itſelf into the minds of men, grew up in ſilence and obſcurity, derived new vigour from oppoſition, and finally erected the triumphant banner of the croſs on the ruins of the Capitol. Nor was the influence of Chriſtianity confined to the period or to the limits of the Roman empire. After a revolution of thirteen or fourteen centuries, that religion is ſtill profeſſed by the nations of Europe, the moſt diſtinguiſhed portion of human kind in arts and learning as well as in arms. By the induſtry and zeal of the Europeans, it has been widely diffuſed to the moſt diſtant ſhores of Aſia and Africa; and by the means of their colonies has been firmly eſtabliſhed from Canada to Chili, in a world unknown to the ancients.

Its difficulties.

But this inquiry, however uſeful or entertaining, is attended with two peculiar difficulties. The ſcanty and ſuſpicious materials of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory ſeldom enable us to diſpel the dark cloud that

CHAP. XV.

hangs over the first age of the church. The great law of impartiality too often obliges us to reveal the imperfections of the uninspired teachers and believers of the gospel; and, to a careless observer, *their* faults may seem to cast a shade on the faith which they professed. But the scandal of the pious Christian, and the fallacious triumph of the Infidel, should cease as soon as they recollect not only *by whom*, but likewise *to whom*, the Divine Revelation was given. The theologian may indulge the pleasing task of describing Religion as she descended from Heaven, arrayed in her native purity. A more melancholy duty is imposed on the historian. He must discover the inevitable mixture of error and corruption, which she contracted in a long residence upon earth, among a weak and degenerate race of beings.

Five causes of the growth of Christianity.

Our curiosity is naturally prompted to inquire by what means the Christian faith obtained so remarkable a victory over the established religions of the earth. To this inquiry, an obvious but satisfactory answer may be returned; that it was owing to the convincing evidence of the doctrine itself, and to the ruling providence of its great Author. But as truth and reason seldom find so favourable a reception in the world, and as the wisdom of Providence frequently condescends to use the passions of the human heart, and the general circumstances of mankind, as instruments to execute its purpose; we may still be permitted, though with becoming submission, to ask, not indeed what were the first, but what were the

CHAP. XV.

ſecondary cauſes of the rapid growth of the Chriſtian church. It will, perhaps, appear, that it was moſt effectually favoured and aſſiſted by the five following cauſes: I. The inflexible, and, if we may uſe the expreſſion, the intolerant zeal of the Chriſtians, derived, it is true, from the Jewish religion, but purified from the narrow and unſocial ſpirit, which, inſtead of inviting, had deterred the Gentiles from embracing the law of Moſes. II. The doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumſtance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth. III. The miraculous powers aſcribed to the primitive church. IV. The pure and auſtere morals of the Chriſtians. V. The union and diſcipline of the Chriſtian republic, which gradually formed an independent and increaſing ſtate in the heart of the Roman empire.

THE FIRST CAUSE. Zeal of the Jews.

I. We have already deſcribed the religious harmony of the ancient world, and the facility with which the moſt different and even hoſtile nations embraced, or at leaſt reſpected, each other's ſuperſtitions. A ſingle people refuſed to join in the common intercourſe of mankind. The Jews, who under the Aſſyrian and Perſian monarchies, had languiſhed for many ages the moſt deſpiſed portion of their slaves [1], emerged from obſcurity under the ſucceſſors of Alexander; and as they multiplied to a ſurpriſing degree in the Eaſt, and afterwards in the Weſt, they ſoon excited the curioſity and wonder of other nations [2]. The ſullen obſtinacy with which they maintained their

CHAP. XV.

peculiar rites and unſocial manners, ſeemed to mark them out a diſtinct ſpecies of men, who boldly profeſſed, or who faintly diſguiſed, their implacable hatred to the reſt of human-kind [i]. Neither the violence of Antiochus, nor the arts of Herod, nor the example of the circumjacent nations, could ever perſuade the Jews to aſſociate with the inſtitutions of Moſes the elegant mythology of the Greeks [k]. According to the maxims of univerſal toleration, the Romans protected a ſuperſtition which they deſpiſed [l]. The polite Auguſtus condeſcended to give orders, that ſacrifices ſhould be offered for his proſperity in the temple of Jeruſalem [m]; while the meaneſt of the poſterity of Abraham, who ſhould have paid the ſame homage to the Jupiter of the Capitol, would have been an object of abhorrence to himſelf and to his brethren. But the moderation of the conquerors was inſufficient to appeaſe the jealous prejudices of their ſubjects, who were alarmed and ſcandalized at the enſigns of paganiſm, which neceſſarily introduced themſelves into a Roman province [n]. The mad attempt of Caligula to place his own ſtatue in the temple of Jeruſalem, was defeated by the unanimous reſolution of a people who dreaded death much leſs than ſuch an idolatrous profanation [o]. Their attachment to the law of Moſes was equal to their deteſtation of foreign religions. The current of zeal and devotion, as it was contracted into a narrow channel, ran with the ſtrength, and ſometimes with the fury, of a torrent.

CHAP. XV. Its gradual increaſe.

This inflexible perſeverance, which appeared ſo odious or ſo ridiculous to the ancient world, aſſumes a more awful character, ſince Providence has deigned to reveal to us the myſterious hiſtory of the choſen people. But the devout and even ſcrupulous attachment to the Moſaic religion, ſo conſpicuous among the Jews who lived under the ſecond temple, becomes ſtill more ſurpriſing, if it is compared with the ſtubborn incredulity of their forefathers. When the law was given in thunder from Mount Sinai; when the tides of the ocean, and the courſe of the planets were ſuſpended for the convenience of the Iſraelites; and when temporal rewards and punishments were the immediate conſequences of their piety or diſobedience, they perpetually relapſed into rebellion againſt the viſible majeſty of their Divine King, placed the idols of the nations in the ſanctuary of Jehovah, and imitated every fantaſtic ceremony that was practiſed in the tents of the Arabs, or in the cities of Phœnicia [*]. As the protection of Heaven was deſervedly withdrawn from the ungrateful race, their faith acquired a proportionable degree of vigour and purity. The contemporaries of Moſes and Joshua had beheld with careleſs indifference the moſt amazing miracles. Under the preſſure of every calamity, the belief of thoſe miracles has preſerved the Jews of a later period from the univerſal contagion of idolatry; and in contradiction to every known principle of the human mind, that ſingular people ſeems to have yielded a ſtronger and more ready aſſent to the tra-

CHAP. XV.

ditions of their remote anceſtors, than to the evidence of their own ſenſes [10].

Their religion better ſuited to defence than to conqueſt.

The Jewiſh religion was admirably fitted for defence, but it was never deſigned for conqueſt; and it ſeems probable that the number of proſelytes was never much ſuperior to that of apoſtates. The divine promiſes were originally made, and the diſtinguiſhing rite of circumciſion was enjoined to a ſingle family. When the poſterity of Abraham had multiplied like the ſands of the ſea, the Deity, from whoſe mouth they received a ſyſtem of laws and ceremonies, declared himſelf the proper and as it were the national God of Iſrael; and with the moſt jealous care ſeparated his favourite people from the reſt of mankind. The conqueſt of the land of Canaan was accompanied with ſo many wonderful and with ſo many bloody circumſtances, that the victorious Jews were left in a ſtate of irreconciliable hoſtility with all their neighbours. They had been commanded to extirpate ſome of the moſt idolatrous tribes, and the execution of the Divine will had ſeldom been retarded by the weakneſs of humanity. With the other nations they were forbidden to contract any marriages or alliances, and the prohibition of receiving them into the congregation, which in ſome caſes was perpetual, almoſt always extended to the third, to the ſeventh, or even to the tenth generation. The obligation of preaching to the Gentiles the faith of Moſes, had never been inculcated as a precept of the law, nor were the Jews inclined to impoſe it on themſelves as a voluntary

luntary duty. In the admiſſion of new citizens, that unſocial people was actuated by the ſelfiſh vanity of the Greeks, rather than by the generous policy of Rome. The deſcendants of Abraham were flattered by the opinion, that they alone were the heirs of the covenant, and they were apprehenſive of diminiſhing the value of their inheritance, by ſharing it too eaſily with the ſtrangers of the earth. A larger acquaintance with mankind, extended their knowledge without correcting their prejudices; and whenever the God of Iſrael acquired any new votaries, he was much more indebted to the inconſtant humour of polytheiſm than to the active zeal of his own miſſionaries [11]. The religion of Moſes ſeems to be inſtituted for a particular country as well as for a ſingle nation; and if a ſtrict obedience had been paid to the order, that every male, three times in the year, ſhould preſent himſelf before the Lord Jehovah, it would have been impoſſible that the Jews could ever have ſpread themſelves beyond the narrow limits of the promiſed land [12]. That obſtacle was indeed removed by the deſtruction of the temple of Jeruſalem; but the moſt conſiderable part of the Jewiſh religion was involved in its deſtruction; and the pagans, who had long wondered at the ſtrange report of an empty ſanctuary [13], were at a loſs to diſcover what could be the object, or what could be the inſtruments, of a worſhip which was deſtitute of temples and of altars, of prieſts and of ſacrifices. Yet even in their fallen ſtate, the Jews, ſtill aſſerting their

CHAP. XV.

CHAP. XV.

lofty and excluſive privileges, ſhunned, inſtead of courting, the ſociety of ſtrangers. They ſtill inſiſted with inflexible rigour on thoſe parts of the law which it was in their power to practiſe. Their peculiar diſtinctions of days, of meats, and a variety of trivial though burdenſome obſervances, were ſo many objects of diſguſt and averſion for the other nations, to whoſe habits and prejudices they were diametrically oppoſite. The painful and even dangerous rite of circumciſion was alone capable of repelling a willing proſelyte from the door of the ſynagogue [14].

More liberal zeal of Chriſtianity.

Under theſe circumſtances, Chriſtianity offered itſelf to the world, armed with the ſtrength of the Moſaic law, and delivered from the weight of its fetters. An excluſive zeal for the truth of religion, and the unity of God, was as carefully inculcated in the new as in the ancient ſyſtem: and whatever was now revealed to mankind concerning the nature and deſigns of the Supreme Being, was fitted to increaſe their reverence for that myſterious doctrine. The divine authority of Moſes and the prophets was admitted, and even eſtabliſhed, as the firmeſt baſis of Chriſtianity. From the beginning of the world, an uninterrupted ſeries of predictions had announced and prepared the long expected coming of the Meſſiah, who, in compliance with the groſs apprehenſions of the Jews, had been more frequently repreſented under the character of a King and Conqueror, than under that of a Prophet, a Martyr, and the Son of God. By his expiatory ſacrifice, the im-

perfect ſacrifices of the temple were at once conſummated and abolished. The ceremonial law, which conſiſted only of types and figures, was ſucceeded by a pure and ſpiritual worship, equally adapted to all climates, as well as to every condition of mankind; and to the initiation of blood, was ſubſtituted a more harmleſs initiation of water. The promiſe of divine favour, inſtead of being partially confined to the poſterity of Abraham, was univerſally propoſed to the freeman and the ſlave, to the Greek and to the barbarian, to the Jew and to the Gentile. Every privilege that could raiſe the proſelyte from earth to Heaven, that could exalt his devotion, ſecure his happineſs, or even gratify that ſecret pride, which, under the ſemblance of devotion, inſinuates itſelf into the human heart, was ſtill reſerved for the members of the Chriſtian church; but at the ſame time all mankind was permitted, and even ſolicited, to accept the glorious diſtinction, which was not only proffered as a favour, but impoſed as an obligation. It became the moſt ſacred duty of a new convert to diffuſe among his friends and relations the ineſtimable bleſſing which he had received, and to warn them againſt a refuſal that would be ſeverely punished as a criminal diſobedience to the will of a benevolent but all-powerful deity.

CHAP. XV.

The enfranchiſement of the church from the bonds of the ſynagogue, was a work however of ſome time and of ſome difficulty. The Jewiſh converts, who acknowledged Jeſus in the charac-

Obſtinacy and reaſons of the believing Jews.

CHAP. XV.

ter of the Meſſiah foretold by their ancient oracles, reſpected him as a prophetic teacher of virtue and religion; but they obſtinately adhered to the ceremonies of their anceſtors, and were deſirous of impoſing them on the Gentiles, who continually augmented the number of believers. Theſe Judaiſing Chriſtians ſeem to have argued with ſome degree of plauſibility from the divine origin of the Moſaic law, and from the immutable perfections of its great Author. They affirmed, *that* if the Being, who is the ſame through all eternity, had deſigned to abolish thoſe ſacred rites which had ſerved to diſtinguish his choſen people, the repeal of them would have been no leſs clear and ſolemn than their firſt promulgation: *that*, inſtead of thoſe frequent declarations, which either ſuppoſe or aſſert the perpetuity of the Moſaic religion, it would have been repreſented as a proviſionary ſcheme intended to laſt only till the coming of the Meſſiah, who ſhould inſtruct mankind in a more perfect mode of faith and of worship [15]: *that* the Meſſiah himſelf, and his diſciples who converſed with him on earth, inſtead of authorizing by their example the moſt minute obſervances of the Moſaic law [16], would have published to the world the abolition of thoſe uſeleſs and obſolete ceremonies, without ſuffering Chriſtianity to remain during ſo many years obſcurely confounded among the ſects of the Jewish church. Arguments like theſe appear to have been uſed in the defence of the expiring cauſe of the Moſaic law; but the induſtry of our learned divines has abundantly

explained the ambiguous language of the Old Teſtament, and the ambiguous conduct of the apoſtolic teachers. It was proper gradually to unfold the ſyſtem of the Goſpel, and to pronounce, with the utmoſt caution and tenderneſs, a ſentence of condemnation ſo repugnant to the inclination and prejudices of the believing Jews. CHAP. XV.

The hiſtory of the church of Jeruſalem affords a lively proof of the neceſſity of thoſe precautions, and of the deep impreſſion which the Jewish religion had made on the minds of its ſectaries. The firſt fifteen bishops of Jeruſalem were all circumciſed Jews; and the congregation over which they preſided, united the law of Moſes with the doctrine of Chriſt [17]. It was natural that the primitive tradition of a church which was founded only forty days after the death of Chriſt, and was governed almoſt as many years under the immediate inſpection of his apoſtles, should be received as the ſtandard of orthodoxy [18]. The diſtant churches very frequently appealed to the authority of their venerable Parent, and relieved her diſtreſſes by a liberal contribution of alms. But when numerous and opulent ſocieties were eſtablished in the great cities of the empire, in Antioch, Alexandria, Epheſus, Corinth, and Rome, the reverence which Jeruſalem had inſpired to all the Chriſtian colonies inſenſibly diminished. The Jewish converts, or, as they were afterwards called, the Nazarenes, who had laid the foundations of the church, ſoon found themſelves overwhelmed by the increaſing multitudes, that from all the The Nazarene church of Jeruſalem.

CHAP. XV.

various religions of polytheiſm inliſted under the banner of Chriſt: and the Gentiles, who, with the approbation of their peculiar apoſtle, had rejected the intolerable weight of Moſaic ceremonies, at length refuſed to their more ſcrupulous brethren the ſame toleration which at firſt they had humbly ſolicited for their own practice. The ruin of the temple, of the city, and of the public religion of the Jews, was ſeverely felt by the Nazarenes; as in their manners, though not in their faith, they maintained ſo intimate a connexion with their impious countrymen, whoſe misfortunes were attributed by the Pagans to the contempt, and more juſtly aſcribed by the Chriſtians to the wrath, of the Supreme Deity. The Nazarenes retired from the ruins of Jeruſalem to the little town of Pella beyond the Jordan, where that ancient church languiſhed above ſixty years in ſolitude and obſcurity [19]. They ſtill enjoyed the comfort of making frequent and devout viſits to the *Holy City*, and the hope of being one day reſtored to thoſe ſeats which both nature and religion taught them to love as well as to revere. But at length, under the reign of Hadrian, the deſperate fanaticiſm of the Jews filled up the meaſure of their calamities; and the Romans, exaſperated by their repeated rebellions, exerciſed the rights of victory with unuſual rigour. The emperor founded, under the name of Ælia Capitolina, a new city on Mount Sion [20], to which he gave the privileges of a colony; and denouncing the ſevereſt penalties againſt any of the Jewiſh

people who should dare to approach its precincts, he fixed a vigilant garrison of a Roman cohort to enforce the execution of his orders. The Nazarenes had only one way left to escape the common proscription, and the force of truth was on this occasion assisted by the influence of temporal advantages. They elected Marcus for their bishop, a prelate of the race of the Gentiles, and most probably a native either of Italy or of some of the Latin provinces. At his persuasion, the most considerable part of the congregation renounced the Mosaic law, in the practice of which they had persevered above a century. By this sacrifice of their habits and prejudices, they purchased a free admission into the colony of Hadrian, and more firmly cemented their union with the Catholic church [21]. CHAP. XV.

When the name and honours of the church of Jerusalem had been restored to Mount Sion, the crimes of heresy and schism were imputed to the obscure remnant of the Nazarenes, which refused to accompany their Latin bishop. They still preserved their former habitation of Pella, spread themselves into the villages adjacent to Damascus, and formed an inconsiderable church in the city of Bœrea, or, as it is now called, of Aleppo, in Syria [22]. The name of Nazarenes was deemed too honourable for those Christian Jews, and they soon received from the supposed poverty of their understanding, as well as of their condition, the contemptuous epithet of Ebionites [23]. In a few years after the return of the church of Jerusalem, The Ebionites.

CHAP. XV.

it became a matter of doubt and controverſy, whether a man who ſincerely acknowledged Jeſus as the Meſſiah, but who ſtill continued to obſerve the law of Moſes, could poſſibly hope for ſalvation. The humane temper of Juſtin Martyr inclined him to anſwer this queſtion in the affirmative; and though he expreſſed himſelf with the moſt guarded diffidence, he ventured to determine in favour of ſuch an imperfect Chriſtian, if he were content to practiſe the Moſaic ceremonies, without pretending to aſſert their general uſe or neceſſity. But when Juſtin was preſſed to declare the ſentiment of the church, he confeſſed that there were very many among the orthodox Chriſtians, who not only excluded their Judaiſing brethren from the hope of ſalvation, but who declined any intercourſe with them in the common offices of friendſhip, hoſpitality, and ſocial life [24]. The more rigorous opinion prevailed, as it was natural to expect, over the milder; and an eternal bar of ſeparation was fixed between the diſciples of Moſes and thoſe of Chriſt. The unfortunate Ebionites, rejected from one religion as apoſtates, and from the other as heretics, found themſelves compelled to aſſume a more decided character; and although ſome traces of that obſolete ſect may be diſcovered as late as the fourth century, they inſenſibly melted away either into the church or the ſynagogue [25].

The Gnoſtics.

While the orthodox church preſerved a juſt medium between exceſſive veneration and improper contempt for the law of Moſes, the various

heretics deviated into equal but oppoſite extremes of error and extravagance. From the acknowledged truth of the Jewiſh religion, the Ebionites had concluded that it could never be abolished. From its ſuppoſed imperfections the Gnoſtics as haſtily inferred that it never was inſtituted by the wiſdom of the Deity. There are ſome objections againſt the authority of Moſes and the prophets, which too readily preſent themſelves to the ſcepti-cal mind; though they can only be derived from our ignorance of remote antiquity, and from our incapacity to form an adequate judgment of the divine œconomy. Theſe objections were eagerly embraced and as petulantly urged by the vain ſcience of the Gnoſtics [26]. As thoſe heretics were, for the moſt part, averſe to the pleaſures of ſenſe, they moroſely arraigned the polygamy of the patriarchs, the gallantries of David, and the ſeraglio of Solomon. The conqueſt of the land of Canaan, and the extirpation of the unſuſpecting natives, they were at a loſs how to reconcile with the common notions of humanity and juſtice. But when they recollected the ſanguinary liſt of murders, of executions, and of maſſacres, which ſtain almoſt every page of the Jewiſh annals, they acknowledged that the barbarians of Paleſtine had exerciſed as much compaſſion towards their idolatrous enemies, as they had ever ſhewn to their friends or countrymen [27]. Paſſing from the ſectaries of the law to the law itſelf, they aſſerted that it was impoſſible that a religion which conſiſted only of bloody ſacrifices and trifling ceremonies,

CHAP. XV.

CHAP. XV.

and whoſe rewards as well as punishments were all of carnal and temporal nature, could inſpire the love of virtue, or reſtrain the impetuoſity of paſſion. The Moſaic account of the creation and fall of man was treated with profane deriſion by the Gnoſtics, who would not liſten with patience to the repoſe of the Deity after ſix days labour, to the rib of Adam, the garden of Eden, the trees of life and of knowledge, the ſpeaking ſerpent, the forbidden fruit, and the condemnation pronounced againſt human kind for the venal offence of their firſt progenitors [28]. The God of Iſrael was impiously repreſented by the Gnoſtics, as a being liable to paſſion and to error, capricious in his favour, implacable in his reſentment, meanly jealous of his ſuperſtitious worship, and confining his partial providence to a ſingle people, and to this tranſitory life. In ſuch a character they could diſcover none of the features of the wiſe and omnipotent father of the univerſe [29]. They allowed that the religion of the Jews was ſomewhat leſs criminal than the idolatry of the Gentiles; but it was their fundamental doctrine, that the Chriſt whom they adored as the firſt and brighteſt emanation of the Deity, appeared upon earth to reſcue mankind from their various errors, and to reveal a *new* ſyſtem of truth and perfection. The moſt learned of the fathers, by a very ſingular condeſcenſion, have imprudently admitted the ſophiſtry of the Gnoſtics. Acknowledging that the literal ſenſe is repugnant to every principle of faith as well as reaſon, they deem themſelves ſecure

and invulnerable behind the ample veil of allegory, which they carefully ſpread over every tender part of the Moſaic diſpenſation [36].

Their ſects, progreſs, and influence.

It has been remarked with more ingenuity than truth, that the virgin purity of the church was never violated by ſchiſm or hereſy before the reign of Trajan or Hadrian, about one hundred years after the death of Chriſt [37]. We may obſerve with much more propriety, that, during that period, the diſciples of the Meſſiah were indulged in a freer latitude both of faith and practice, than has ever been allowed in ſucceeding ages. As the terms of communion were inſenſibly narrowed, and the ſpiritual authority of the prevailing party was exerciſed with increaſing ſeverity, many of its moſt reſpectable adherents, who were called upon to renounce, were provoked to aſſert their private opinions, to purſue the conſequences of their miſtaken principles, and openly to erect the ſtandard of rebellion againſt the unity of the church. The Gnoſtics were diſtinguished as the moſt polite, the moſt learned, and the moſt wealthy of the Chriſtian name, and that general appellation which expreſſed a ſuperiority of knowledge, was either aſſumed by their own pride, or ironically beſtowed by the envy of their adverſaries. They were almoſt without exception of the race of the Gentiles, and their principal founders ſeem to have been natives of Syria or Egypt, where the warmth of the climate diſpoſes both the mind and the body to indolent and contemplative devotion. The Gnoſtics blended with the faith of Chriſt many ſub-

CHAP. XV.

lime but obſcure tenets, which they derived from oriental philoſophy, and even from the religion of Zoroaſter, concerning the eternity of matter, the exiſtence of two principles, and the myſterious hierarchy of the inviſible world [32]. As ſoon as they launched out into that vaſt abyſs, they delivered themſelves to the guidance of a diſordered imagination; and as the paths of error are various and infinite, the Gnoſtics were imperceptibly divided into more than fifty particular ſects [33], of whom the moſt celebrated appear to have been the Baſilidians, the Valentinians, the Marcionites, and, in a ſtill later period, the Manichæans. Each of theſe ſects could boaſt of its biſhops and congregations, of its doctors and martyrs [34], and, inſtead of the four goſpels adopted by the church, the heretics produced a multitude of hiſtories, in which the actions and diſcourſes of Chriſt and of his apoſtles were adapted to their reſpective tenets [35]. The ſucceſs of the Gnoſtics was rapid and extenſive [36]. They covered Aſia and Egypt, eſtabliſhed themſelves in Rome, and ſometimes penetrated into the provinces of the Weſt. For the moſt part they aroſe in the ſecond century, flouriſhed during the third, and were ſuppreſſed in the fourth or fifth, by the prevalence of more fashionable controverſies, and by the ſuperior aſcendant of the reigning power. Though they conſtantly diſturbed the peace, and frequently diſgraced the name, of religion, they contributed to aſſiſt rather than to retard the progreſs of Chriſtianity. The Gentile converts, whoſe ſtrongeſt objections and

prejudices were directed againſt the law of Moſes, could find admiſſion into many Chriſtian ſocieties, which required not from their untutored mind any belief of an antecedent revelation. Their faith was inſenſibly fortified and enlarged, and the church was ultimately benefited by the conqueſts of its moſt inveterate enemies [37].

The dæmons conſidered as the gods of antiquity.

But whatever difference of opinion might ſubſiſt between the Orthodox, the Ebionites, and the Gnoſtics, concerning the divinity or the obligation of the Moſaic law, they were all equally animated by the ſame excluſive zeal, and by the ſame abhorrence for idolatry which had diſtinguiſhed the Jews from the other nations of the ancient world. The philoſopher, who conſidered the ſyſtem of polytheiſm as a compoſition of human fraud and error, could diſguiſe a ſmile of contempt under the mask of devotion, without apprehending that either the mockery, or the compliance, would expoſe him to the reſentment of any inviſible, or, as he conceived them, imaginary powers. But the eſtabliſhed religions of Paganiſm were ſeen by the primitive Chriſtians in a much more odious and formidable light. It was the univerſal ſentiment both of the church and of heretics, that the dæmons were the authors, the patrons, and the objects of idolatry [38]. Thoſe rebellious ſpirits who had been degraded from the rank of angels, and caſt down into the infernal pit, were ſtill permitted to roam upon earth, to torment the bodies, and to ſeduce the minds, of ſinful men. The dæmons ſoon diſcovered and

CHAP. XV.

abuſed the natural propenſity of the human heart towards devotion, and, artfully withdrawing the adoration of mankind from their Creator, they uſurped the place and honours of the Supreme Deity. By the ſucceſs of their malicious contrivances, they at once gratified their own vanity and revenge, and obtained the only comfort of which they were yet ſuſceptible, the hope of involving the human ſpecies in the participation of their guilt and miſery. It was confeſſed, or at leaſt it was imagined, that they had diſtributed among themſelves the moſt important characters of polytheiſm, one dæmon aſſuming the name and attributes of Jupiter, another of Æſculapius, a third of Venus, and a fourth perhaps of Apollo "; and that, by the advantage of their long experience and aërial nature, they were enabled to execute, with ſufficient skill and dignity, the parts which they had undertaken. They lurked in the temples, inſtituted feſtivals and ſacrifices, invented fables, pronounced oracles, and were frequently allowed to perform miracles. The Chriſtians, who, by the interpoſition of evil ſpirits, could ſo readily explain every præternatural appearance, were diſpoſed and even deſirous to admit the moſt extravagant fictions of the Pagan mythology. But the belief of the Chriſtian was accompanied with horror. The moſt trifling mark of reſpect to the national worship he conſidered as a direct homage yielded to the dæmon, and as an act of rebellion againſt the majeſty of God.

In consequence of this opinion, it was the first but arduous duty of a Christian to preserve himself pure and undefiled by the practice of idolatry. The religion of the nations was not merely a speculative doctrine professed in the schools or preached in the temples. The innumerable deities and rites of polytheism were closely interwoven with every circumstance of business or pleasure, of public or of private life; and it seemed impossible to escape the observance of them, without, at the same time, renouncing the commerce of mankind, and all the offices and amusements of society [40]. The important transactions of peace and war were prepared or concluded by solemn sacrifices, in which the magistrate, the senator, and the soldier, were obliged to preside or to participate [41]. The public spectacles were an essential part of the cheerful devotion of the Pagans, and the gods were supposed to accept, as the most grateful offering, the games that the prince and people celebrated in honour of their peculiar festivals [42]. The Christian, who with pious horror avoided the abomination of the circus or the theatre, found himself encompassed with infernal snares in every convivial entertainment, as often as his friends, invoking the hospitable deities, poured out libations to each other's happiness [43]. When the bride, struggling with well-affected reluctance, was forced in hymenæal pomp over the threshold of her new habitation [44], or when the sad procession of the dead slowly moved towards the funeral pile [45]; the Christian,

CHAP. XV.

Abhorrence of the Christians for idolatry.

Ceremonies.

CHAP. XV.

on theſe intereſting occaſions, was compelled to deſert the perſons who were the deareſt to him, rather than contract the guilt inherent to thoſe impious ceremonies. Every art and every trade that was in the leaſt concerned in the framing or adorning of idols was polluted by the ſtain of idolatry [46]; a ſevere ſentence, ſince it devoted to eternal miſery the far greater part of the community, which is employed in the exerciſe of liberal or mechanic profeſſions. If we caſt our eyes over the numerous remains of antiquity, we ſhall perceive, that beſides the immediate repreſentations of the Gods, and the holy inſtruments of their worſhip, the elegant forms and agreeable fictions conſecrated by the imagination of the Greeks, were introduced as the richeſt ornaments of the houſes, the dreſs, and the furniture, of the Pagans [47]. Even the arts of muſic and painting, of eloquence and poetry, flowed from the ſame impure origin. In the ſtyle of the fathers, Apollo and the Muſes were the organs of the infernal ſpirit, Homer and Virgil were the moſt eminent of his ſervants, and the beautiful mythology which pervades and animates the compoſitions of their genius, is deſtined to celebrate the glory of the dæmons. Even the common language of Greece and Rome abounded with familiar but impious expreſſions, which the imprudent Chriſtian might too careleſsly utter, or too patiently hear [48].

Arts.

Feſtivals.

The dangerous temptations which on every ſide lurked in ambuſh to ſurpriſe the unguarded believer,

believer, aſſailed him with redoubled violence on the days of ſolemn feſtivals. So artfully were they framed and diſpoſed throughout the year, that ſuperſtition always wore the appearance of pleaſure, and often of virtue [41]. Some of the moſt ſacred feſtivals in the Roman ritual were deſtined to ſalute the new calends of January with vows of public and private felicity, to indulge the pious remembrance of the dead and living, to aſcertain the inviolable bounds of property, to hail, on the return of ſpring, the genial powers of fecundity, to perpetuate the two memorable æras of Rome, the foundation of the city, and that of the republic, and to reſtore, during the humane licence of the Saturnalia, the primitive equality of mankind. Some idea may be conceived of the abhorrence of the Chriſtians for ſuch impious ceremonies, by the ſcrupulous delicacy which they diſplayed on a much leſs alarming occaſion. On days of general feſtivity, it was the cuſtom of the ancients to adorn their doors with lamps and with branches of laurel, and to crown their heads with a garland of flowers. This innocent and elegant practice might perhaps have been tolerated as a mere civil inſtitution. But it moſt unluckily happened that the doors were under the protection of the houſehold gods, that the laurel was ſacred to the lover of Daphne, and that garlands of flowers, though frequently worn as a ſymbol either of joy or mourning, had been dedicated in their firſt origin to the ſervice of ſuperſtition. The trembling

CHAP. XV.

CHAP. XV.

Christians, who were persuaded in this instance to comply with the fashion of their country, and the commands of the magistrate, laboured under the most gloomy apprehensions, from the reproaches of their own conscience, the censures of the church, and the denunciations of divine vengeance [50].

Zeal for Christianity.

Such was the anxious diligence which was required to guard the chastity of the gospel from the infectious breath of idolatry. The superstitious observances of public or private rites were carelessly practised, from education and habit, by the followers of the established religion. But as often as they occurred, they afforded the Christians an opportunity of declaring and confirming their zealous opposition. By these frequent protestations their attachment to the faith was continually fortified, and in proportion to the increase of zeal, they combated with the more ardour and success in the holy war, which they had undertaken against the empire of the dæmons.

THE SECOND CAUSE. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul among the philosophers;

II. The writings of Cicero [51] represent in the most lively colours the ignorance, the errors, and the uncertainty of the ancient philosophers with regard to the immortality of the soul. When they are desirous of arming their disciples against the fear of death, they inculcate, as an obvious, though melancholy position, that the fatal stroke of our dissolution releases us from the calamities of life; and that those can no longer suffer who no longer exist. Yet there were a few

ſages of Greece and Rome who had conceived a more exalted, and, in ſome reſpects, a juſter idea of human nature; though it muſt be confeſſed, that, in the ſublime inquiry, their reaſon had been often guided by their imagination, and that their imagination had been prompted by their vanity. When they viewed with complacency the extent of their own mental powers, when they exerciſed the various faculties of memory, of fancy, and of judgment, in the moſt profound ſpeculations, or the moſt important labours, and when they reflected on the deſire of fame, which tranſported them into future ages, far beyond the bounds of death and of the grave; they were unwilling to confound themſelves with the beaſts of the field, or to ſuppoſe, that a being, for whoſe dignity they entertained the moſt ſincere admiration, could be limited to a ſpot of earth, and to a few years of duration. With this favourable prepoſſeſſion they ſummoned to their aid the ſcience, or rather the language, of Metaphyſics. They ſoon diſcovered, that as none of the properties of matter will apply to the operations of the mind, the human ſoul muſt conſequently be a ſubſtance diſtinct from the body, pure, ſimple, and ſpiritual, incapable of diſſolution, and ſuſceptible of a much higher degree of virtue and happineſs after the releaſe from its corporeal priſon. From theſe ſpecious and noble principles, the philoſophers who trod in the footſteps of Plato, deduced a very unjuſtifiable concluſion, ſince they aſſerted, not only

CHAP. XV.

the future immortality, but the paſt eternity of the human ſoul, which they were too apt to conſider as a portion of the infinite and ſelf-exiſting ſpirit, which pervades and ſuſtains the univerſe [52]. A doctrine thus removed beyond the ſenſes and the experience of mankind, might ſerve to amuſe the leiſure of a philoſophic mind; or, in the ſilence of ſolitude, it might ſometimes impart a ray of comfort to deſponding virtue; but the faint impreſſion which had been received in the ſchools, was ſoon obliterated by the commerce and buſineſs of active life. We are ſufficiently acquainted with the eminent perſons who flouriſhed in the age of Cicero, and of the firſt Cæſars, with their actions, their characters, and their motives, to be aſſured that their conduct in this life was never regulated by any ſerious conviction of the rewards or punishments of a future ſtate. At the bar and in the ſenate of Rome the ableſt orators were not apprehenſive of giving offence to their hearers, by expoſing that doctrine as an idle and extravagant opinion, which was rejected with contempt by every man of a liberal education and underſtanding [53].

among the Pagans of Greece and Rome;

Since therefore the moſt ſublime efforts of philoſophy can extend no farther than feebly to point out the deſire, the hope, or, at moſt, the probability, of a future ſtate, there is nothing, except a divine revelation, that can aſcertain the exiſtence, and deſcribe the condition of the inviſible country which is deſtined to receive the ſouls of men after their ſeparation from the body.

CHAP. XV.

But we may perceive ſeveral defects inherent to the popular religions of Greece and Rome, which rendered them very unequal to ſo arduous a task. 1. The general ſyſtem of their mythology was unſupported by any ſolid proofs; and the wiſeſt among the Pagans had already diſclaimed its uſurped authority. 2. The deſcription of the infernal regions had been abandoned to the fancy of painters and of poets, who peopled them with ſo many phantoms and monſters, who diſpenſed their rewards and punishments with ſo little equity, that a ſolemn truth, the moſt congenial to the human heart, was oppreſſed and diſgraced by the abſurd mixture of the wildeſt fictions [*]. 3. The doctrine of a future ſtate was ſcarcely conſidered among the devout polytheiſts of Greece and Rome as a fundamental article of faith. The providence of the gods, as it related to public communities rather than to private individuals, was principally diſplayed on the viſible theatre of the preſent world. The petitions which were offered on the altars of Jupiter or Apollo, expreſſed the anxiety of their worshippers for temporal happineſs, and their ignorance or indifference concerning a future life [*]. The important truth of the immortality of the ſoul was inculcated with more diligence as well as ſucceſs in India, in Aſſyria, in Egypt, and in Gaul; and ſince we cannot attribute ſuch a difference to the ſuperior knowledge of the barbarians, we muſt aſcribe it to the influence of an eſtabliſhed prieſthood, which employed the motives of virtue as the inſtrument of ambition [*]

among the barbarians;

CHAP. XV. among the Jews;

We might naturally expect, that a principle ſo eſſential to religion, would have been revealed in the cleareſt terms to the choſen people of Paleſtine, and that it might ſafely have been intruſted to the hereditary prieſthood of Aaron. It is incumbent on us to adore the myſterious diſpenſations of Providence [57], when we diſcover, that the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul is omitted in the law of Moſes; it is darkly inſinuated by the prophets, and during the long period which elapſed between the Egyptian and the Babylonian ſervitudes, the hopes as well as fears of the Jews appear to have been confined within the narrow compaſs of the preſent life [58]. After Cyrus had permitted the exiled nation to return into the promiſed land, and after Ezra had reſtored the ancient records of their religion, two celebrated ſects, the Sadducees and the Phariſees, inſenſibly aroſe at Jeruſalem [59]. The former ſelected from the more opulent and diſtinguiſhed ranks of ſociety, were ſtrictly attached to the literal ſenſe of the Moſaic law, and they piously rejected the immortality of the ſoul, as an opinion that received no countenance from the divine book, which they revered as the only rule of their faith. To the authority of ſcripture the Phariſees added that of tradition, and they accepted, under the name of traditions, ſeveral ſpeculative tenets from the philoſophy or religion of the eaſtern nations. The doctrines of fate or predeſtination, of angels and ſpirits, and of a future ſtate of rewards and punishments, were

in the number of these new articles of belief; and as the Pharisees, by the austerity of their manners, had drawn into their party the body of the Jewish people, the immortality of the soul became the prevailing sentiment of the synagogue, under the reign of the Asmonæan princes and pontiffs. The temper of the Jews was incapable of contenting itself with such a cold and languid assent as might satisfy the mind of a Polytheist; and as soon as they admitted the idea of a future state, they embraced it with the zeal which has always formed the characteristic of the nation. Their zeal, however, added nothing to its evidence, or even probability; and it was still necessary, that the doctrine of life and immortality, which had been dictated by nature, approved by reason, and received by superstition, should obtain the sanction of divine truth from the authority and example of Christ. CHAP. XV.

When the promise of eternal happiness was proposed to mankind, on condition of adopting the faith, and of observing the precepts of the gospel, it is no wonder that so advantageous an offer should have been accepted by great numbers of every religion, of every rank, and of every province in the Roman empire. The ancient Christians were animated by a contempt for their present existence, and by a just confidence of immortality, of which the doubtful and imperfect faith of modern ages cannot give us any adequate notion. In the primitive church, the influence of truth was very powerfully strength- among the Christians. Approaching end of the world.

CHAP. XV.

ened by an opinion, which, however it may deſerve reſpect for its uſefulneſs and antiquity, has not been found agreeable to experience. It was univerſally believed, that the end of the world and the kingdom of Heaven, were at hand. The near approach of this wonderful event had been predicted by the apoſtles; the tradition of it was preſerved by their earlieſt diſciples, and thoſe who underſtood in their literal ſenſe the diſcourſes of Chriſt himſelf, were obliged to expect the ſecond and glorious coming of the Son of Man in the clouds, before that generation was totally extinguiſhed, which had beheld his humble condition upon earth, and which might ſtill be witneſs of the calamities of the Jews under Veſpaſian or Hadrian. The revolution of ſeventeen centuries has inſtructed us not to preſs too cloſely the myſterious language of prophecy and revelation; but as long as, for wiſe purpoſes, this error was permitted to ſubſiſt in the church, it was productive of the moſt ſalutary effects on the faith and practice of Chriſtians, who lived in the awful expectation of that moment when the globe itſelf, and all the various race of mankind, should tremble at the appearance of their divine judge [**].

Doctrine of the Millennium.

The ancient and popular doctrine of the Millennium was intimately connected with the ſecond coming of Chriſt. As the works of the creation had been finiſhed in ſix days, their duration in their preſent ſtate, according to a tradition which was attributed to the prophet Elijah, was fixed

to ſix thouſand years [61]. By the ſame analogy it was inferred, that this long period of labour and contention, which was now almoſt elapſed [62], would be ſucceeded by a joyful Sabbath of a thouſand years; and that Chriſt, with the triumphant band of the ſaints and the elect who had eſcaped death, or who had been miraculously revived, would reign upon earth till the time appointed for the laſt and general reſurrection. So pleaſing was this hope to the mind of believers, that the *New Jeruſalem*, the ſeat of this bliſsful kingdom, was quickly adorned with all the gayeſt colours of the imagination. A felicity conſiſting only of pure and ſpiritual pleaſure, would have appeared too refined for its inhabitants, who were ſtill ſuppoſed to poſſeſs their human nature and ſenſes. A garden of Eden, with the amuſements of the paſtoral life, was no longer ſuited to the advanced ſtate of ſociety which prevailed under the Roman empire. A city was therefore erected of gold and precious ſtones, and a ſupernatural plenty of corn and wine was beſtowed on the adjacent territory; in the free enjoyment of whoſe ſpontaneous productions, the happy and benevolent people was never to be reſtrained by any jealous laws of excluſive property [63]. The aſſurance of ſuch a Millennium, was carefully inculcated by a ſucceſſion of fathers from Juſtin Martyr [64] and Irenæus, who converſed with the immediate diſciples of the apoſtles, down to Lactantius, who was preceptor to the ſon of Conſtantine [65]. Though it might not be univerſally received, it

CHAP. XV.

CHAP. XV.

appears to have been the reigning ſentiment of the orthodox believers; and it ſeems ſo well adapted to the deſires and apprehenſions of mankind, that it muſt have contributed in a very conſiderable degree to the progreſs of the Chriſtian faith. But when the progreſs of the church was almoſt completed, the temporary ſupport was laid aſide. The doctrine of Chriſt's reign upon earth, was at firſt treated as a profound allegory, was conſidered by degrees as a doubtful and uſeleſs opinion, and was at length rejected as the abſurd invention of hereſy and fanaticiſm [66]. A myſterious prophecy, which ſtill forms a part of the ſacred canon, but which was thought to favour the exploded ſentiment, has very narrowly eſcaped the proſcription of the church [67].

Conflagration of Rome and of the world.

Whilſt the happineſs and glory of a temporal reign were promiſed to the diſciples of Chriſt, the moſt dreadful calamities were denounced againſt an unbelieving world. The edification of the new Jeruſalem was to advance by equal ſteps with the deſtruction of the myſtic Babylon; and as long as the emperors who reigned before Conſtantine perſiſted in the profeſſion of idolatry, the epithet of Babylon was applied to the city and to the empire of Rome. A regular ſeries was prepared of all the moral and phyſical evils which can afflict a flouriſhing nation; inteſtine diſcord, and the invaſion of the fierceſt barbarians from the unknown regions of the North; peſtilence and famine, comets and eclipſes, earth-

quakes and inundations [*]. All these were only so many preparatory and alarming signs of the great catastrophe of Rome, when the country of the Scipios and Cæsars should be consumed by a flame from Heaven, and the city of the seven hills, with her palaces, her temples, and her triumphal arches, should be buried in a vast lake of fire and brimstone. It might, however, afford some consolation to Roman vanity, that the period of their empire would be that of the world itself; which, as it had once perished by the element of water, was destined to experience a second and speedy destruction from the element of fire. In the opinion of a general conflagration, the faith of the Christian very happily coincided with the tradition of the East, the philosophy of the Stoics, and the analogy of Nature; and even the country, which, from religious motives, had been chosen for the origin and principal scene of the conflagration, was the best adapted for that purpose by natural and physical causes; by its deep caverns, beds of sulphur, and numerous volcanoes, of which those of Ætna, of Vesuvius, and of Lipari, exhibit a very imperfect representation. The calmest and most intrepid sceptic could not refuse to acknowledge, that the destruction of the present system of the world by fire, was in itself extremely probable. The Christian, who founded his belief much less on the fallacious arguments of reason than on the authority of tradition and the interpretation of scripture, expected it with terror and con-

CHAP. XV.

CHAP. XV.

fidence as a certain and approaching event; and as his mind was perpetually filled with the ſolemn idea, he conſidered every diſaſter that happened to the empire as an infallible ſymptom of an expiring world [69].

The Pagans devoted to eternal punishment.

The condemnation of the wiſeſt and moſt virtuous of the Pagans, on account of their ignorance or disbelief of the divine truth, ſeems to offend the reaſon and the humanity of the preſent age [70]. But the primitive church, whoſe faith was of a much firmer conſiſtence, delivered over, without heſitation, to eternal torture, the far greater part of the human ſpecies. A charitable hope might perhaps be indulged in favour of Socrates, or ſome other ſages of antiquity, who had conſulted the light of reaſon before that of the goſpel had ariſen [71]. But it was unanimously affirmed, that thoſe who, ſince the birth or the death of Chriſt, had obſtinately perſiſted in the worship of the dæmons, neither deſerved nor could expect a pardon from the irritated juſtice of the Deity. Theſe rigid ſentiments, which had been unknown to the ancient world, appear to have infuſed a ſpirit of bitterneſs into a ſyſtem of love and harmony. The ties of blood and friendship were frequently torn aſunder by the difference of religious faith; and the Chriſtians, who, in this world, found themſelves oppreſſed by the power of the Pagans, were ſometimes ſeduced by reſentment and ſpiritual pride to delight in the proſpect of their future triumph. "You are fond of ſpectacles,,, exclaims the ſtern

Tertullian, "expect the greateſt of all ſpec- CHAP. XV.
„ tacles, the laſt and eternal judgment of the
„ univerſe. How ſhall I admire, how laugh,
„ how rejoice, how exult, when I behold ſo
„ many proud monarchs, and fancied gods,
„ groaning in the loweſt abyſs of darkneſs; ſo
„ many magiſtrates who perſecuted the name of
„ the Lord, liquefying in fiercer fires than they
„ ever kindled againſt the Chriſtians; ſo many
„ ſage philoſophers blushing in red hot flames
„ with their deluded ſcholars; ſo many cele-
„ brated poets trembling before the tribunal,
„ not of Minos, but of Chriſt; ſo many trage-
„ dians, more tuneful in the expreſſion of their
„ own ſufferings; ſo many dancers —." But the humanity of the reader will permit me to draw a veil over the reſt of this infernal deſcription, which the zealous African purſues in a long variety of affected and unfeeling witticiſms [72].

Were often converted by their fears.

Doubtleſs there were many among the primitive Chriſtians of a temper more ſuitable to the meekneſs and charity of their profeſſion. There were many who felt a ſincere compaſſion for the danger of their friends and countrymen, and who exerted the moſt benevolent zeal to ſave them from the impending deſtruction. The careleſs Polytheiſt, aſſailed by new and unexpected terrors, againſt which neither his prieſts nor his philoſophers could afford him any certain protection, was very frequently terrified and ſubdued by the menace of eternal tortures. His fears might aſſiſt the progreſs of his faith and reaſon; and if he could once perſuade himſelf to

CHAP. XV.

ſuſpect that the Chriſtian religion might poſſibly be true, it became an eaſy task to convince him that it was the ſafeſt and moſt prudent party that he could poſſibly embrace.

THE THIRD CAUSE. Miraculous powers of the primitive church.

III. The ſupernatural gifts, which even in this life were aſcribed to the Chriſtians above the reſt of mankind, muſt have conduced to their own comfort, and very frequently to the conviction of infidels. Beſides the occaſional prodigies, which might ſometimes be effected by the immediate interpoſition of the Deity when he ſuſpended the laws of Nature for the ſervice of religion, the Chriſtian church, from the time of the apoſtles and their firſt diſciples [73], has claimed an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of miraculous powers, the gift of tongues, of viſion and of prophecy, the power of expelling dæmons, of healing the ſick, and of raiſing the dead. The knowledge of foreign languages was frequently communicated to the contemporaries of Irenæus, though Irenæus himſelf was left to ſtruggle with the difficulties of a barbarous dialect whilſt he preached the goſpel to the natives of Gaul [74]. The divine inſpiration, whether it was conveyed in the form of a waking or of a ſleeping viſion, is deſcribed as a favour very liberally beſtowed on all ranks of the faithful, on women as on elders, on boys as well as upon biſhops. When their devout minds were ſufficiently prepared by a courſe of prayer, of faſting, and of vigils, to receive the extraordinary impulſe, they were tranſported out of their ſenſes, and delivered in

extaſy what was inſpired, being mere organs of the holy ſpirit, juſt as a pipe or flute is of him who blows into it [75]. We may add, that the deſign of theſe viſions was, for the moſt part, either to diſcloſe the future hiſtory, or to guide the preſent adminiſtration of the church. The expulſion of the dæmons from the bodies of thoſe unhappy perſons whom they had been permitted to torment, was conſidered as a ſignal though ordinary triumph of religion, and is repeatedly alleged by the ancient apologiſts, as the moſt convincing evidence of the truth of Chriſtianity. The awful ceremony was uſually performed in a public manner, and in the preſence of a great number of ſpectators; the patient was relieved by the power or skill of the exorciſt, and the vanquished dæmon was heard to confeſs, that he was one of the fabled gods of antiquity, who had impiously uſurped the adoration of mankind [76]. But the miraculous cure of diſeaſes of the moſt inveterate or even preternatural kind, can no longer occaſion any ſurpriſe, when we recollect, that in the days of Irenæus, about the end of the ſecond century, the reſurrection of the dead was very far from being eſteemed an uncommon event; that the miracle was frequently performed on neceſſary occaſions, by great faſting and the joint ſupplication of the church of the place, and that the perſons thus reſtored to their prayers, had lived afterwards among them many years [77]. At ſuch a period, when faith could boaſt of ſo many wonderful victories over death,

CHAP. XV.

it ſeems difficult to account for the ſcepticiſm of thoſe philoſophers, who ſtill rejected and derided the doctrine of the reſurrection. A noble Grecian had reſted on this important ground the whole controverſy, and promiſed Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, that if he could be gratified with the ſight of a ſingle perſon who had been actually raiſed from the dead, he would immediately embrace the Chriſtian religion. It is ſomewhat remarkable, that the prelate of the firſt eaſtern church, however anxious for the converſion of his friend, thought proper to decline this fair and reaſonable challenge [78].

Their truth conteſted.

The miracles of the primitive church, after obtaining the ſanction of ages, have been lately attacked in a very free and ingenious inquiry [79]; which, though it has met with the moſt favourable reception from the Public, appears to have excited a general ſcandal among the divines of our own as well as of the other proteſtant churches of Europe [80]. Our different ſentiments on this ſubject will be much leſs influenced by any particular arguments, than by our habits of ſtudy and reflection; and above all, by the degree of the evidence which we have accuſtomed ourſelves to require for the proof of a miraculous event. The duty of an hiſtorian does not call upon him to interpoſe his private judgment in this nice and important controverſy; but he ought not to diſſemble the difficulty of adopting ſuch a theory as may reconcile the intereſt of religion with that of reaſon, of making a proper application of that theory,

Our perplexity in defining the miraculous period.

and

and of defining with preciſion the limits of that happy period exempt from error and from deceit, to which we might be diſpoſed to extend the gift of ſupernatural powers. From the firſt of the fathers to the laſt of the popes, a ſucceſſion of biſhops, of ſaints, of martyrs, and of miracles, is continued without interruption, and the progreſs of ſuperſtition was ſo gradual and almoſt imperceptible, that we know not in what particular link we ſhould break the chain of tradition. Every age bears teſtimony to the wonderful events by which it was diſtinguiſhed, and its teſtimony appears no leſs weighty and reſpectable than that of the preceding generation, till we are inſenſibly led on to accuſe our own inconſiſtency, if in the eighth or in the twelfth century we deny to the venerable Bede, or to the holy Bernard, the ſame degree of confidence which, in the ſecond century, we had ſo liberally granted to Juſtin or to Irenæus [**]. If the truth of any of thoſe miracles is appreciated by their apparent uſe and propriety, every age had unbelievers to convince, heretics to confute, and idolatrous nations to convert; and ſufficient motives might always be produced to juſtify the interpoſition of Heaven. And yet ſince every friend to revelation is perſuaded of the reality, and every reaſonable man is convinced of the ceſſation, of miraculous powers, it is evident that there muſt have been *ſome period* in which they were either ſuddenly or gradually withdrawn from the Chriſtian church. Whatever æra is choſen for that purpoſe, the death of the apoſtles, the con- CHAP. XV.

CHAP. XV.

verſion of the Roman empire, or the extinction of the Arian hereſy [82], the inſenſibility of the Chriſtians who lived at that time will equally afford a juſt matter of ſurpriſe. They ſtill ſupported their pretenſions after they had loſt their power. Credulity performed the office of faith; fanaticiſm was permitted to aſſume the language of inſpiration, and the effects of accident or contrivance were aſcribed to ſupernatural cauſes. The recent experience of genuine miracles ſhould have inſtructed the Chriſtian world in the ways of Providence, and habituated their eye (if we may uſe a very inadequate expreſſion) to the ſtyle of the divine artiſt. Should the moſt skilful painter of modern Italy preſume to decorate his feeble imitations with the name of Raphael or of Correggio, the inſolent fraud would be ſoon diſcovered and indignantly rejected.

Uſe of the primitive miracles.

Whatever opinion may be entertained of the miracles of the primitive church ſince the time of the apoſtles, this unreſiſting ſoftneſs of temper, ſo conſpicuous among the believers of the ſecond and third centuries, proved of ſome accidental benefit to the cauſe of truth and religion. In modern times, a latent and even involuntary ſcepticiſm adheres to the moſt pious diſpoſitions. Their admiſſion of ſupernatural truths is much leſs an active conſent, than a cold and paſſive acquieſcence. Accuſtomed long ſince to obſerve and to reſpect the invariable order of Nature, our reaſon, or at leaſt our imagination, is not ſufficiently prepared to ſuſtain the viſible action of

the Deity. But, in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, the ſituation of mankind was extremely different. The moſt curious, or the moſt credulous, among the Pagans, were often perſuaded to enter into a ſociety, which aſſerted an actual claim of miraculous powers. The primitive Chriſtians perpetually trod on myſtic ground, and their minds were exerciſed by the habits of believing the moſt extraordinary events. They felt, or they fancied, that on every ſide they were inceſſantly aſſaulted by dæmons, comforted by viſions, inſtructed by prophecy, and ſurpriſingly delivered from danger, ſickneſs, and from death itſelf, by the ſupplications of the church. The real or imaginary prodigies, of which they ſo frequently conceived themſelves to be the objects, the inſtruments, or the ſpectators, very happily diſpoſed them to adopt with the ſame eaſe, but with far greater juſtice, the authentic wonders of the evangelic hiſtory; and thus miracles that exceeded not the meaſure of their own experience, inſpired them with the moſt lively aſſurance of myſteries which were acknowledged to ſurpaſs the limits of their underſtanding. It is this deep impreſſion of ſupernatural truths, which has been ſo much celebrated under the name of faith; a ſtate of mind deſcribed as the ſureſt pledge of the divine favour and of future felicity, and recommended as the firſt or perhaps the only merit of a Chriſtian. According to the more rigid doctors, the moral virtues, which may be equally practiſed by infidels, are deſtitute of any value or efficacy in the work of our juſtification. CHAP. XV.

CHAP. XV. THE FOURTH CAUSE. Virtues of the firſt Chriſtians.

IV. But the primitive Chriſtian demonſtrated his faith by his virtues; and it was very juſtly ſuppoſed that the divine perſuaſion which enlightened or ſubdued the underſtanding, muſt, at the ſame time, purify the heart and direct the actions of the believer. The firſt apologiſts of Chriſtianity who juſtify the innocence of their brethren, and the writers of a later period who celebrate the ſanctity of their anceſtors, diſplay, in the moſt lively colours, the reformation of manners which was introduced into the world by the preaching of the goſpel. As it is my intention to remark only ſuch human cauſes as were permitted to ſecond the influence of revelation, I ſhall ſlightly mention two motives which might naturally render the lives of the primitive Chriſtians much purer and more auſtere than thoſe of their Pagan contemporaries, or their degenerate ſucceſſors; repentance for their paſt ſins, and the laudable deſire of ſupporting the reputation of the ſociety in which they were engaged.

Effects of their repentance.

It is a very ancient reproach, ſuggeſted by the ignorance or the malice of infidelity, that the Chriſtians allured into their party the moſt atrocious criminals, who, as ſoon as they were touched by a ſenſe of remorſe, were eaſily perſuaded to waſh away, in the water of baptiſm, the guilt of their paſt conduct, for which the temples of the gods refuſed to grant them any expiation. But this reproach, when it is cleared from miſrepreſentation, contributes as much to the honour as it did to the increaſe of the church [11].

CHAP. XV.

The friends of Chriſtianity may acknowledge without a blush, that many of the moſt eminent ſaints had been before their baptiſm the moſt abandoned ſinners. Thoſe perſons, who in the world had followed, though in an imperfect manner, the dictates of benevolence and propriety, derived ſuch a calm ſatisfaction from the opinion of their own rectitude, as rendered them much leſs ſuſceptible of the ſudden emotions of ſhame, of grief, and of terror, which have given birth to ſo many wonderful converſions. After the example of their Divine Maſter, the miſſionaries of the goſpel diſdained not the ſociety of men, and eſpecially of women, oppreſſed by the conſciouſneſs, and very often by the effects, of their vices. As they emerged from ſin and ſuperſtition to the glorious hope of immortality, they reſolved to devote themſelves to a life, not only of virtue, but of penitence. The deſire of perfection became the ruling paſſion of their ſoul; and it is well known, that while reaſon embraces a cold mediocrity, our paſſions hurry us, with rapid violence, over the ſpace which lies between the moſt oppoſite extremes.

Care of their reputation.

When the new converts had been enrolled in the number of the faithful, and were admitted to the ſacraments of the church, they found themſelves reſtrained from relapſing into their paſt diſorders by another conſideration of a leſs ſpiritual, but of a very innocent and reſpectable nature. Any particular ſociety that has departed from the great body of the nation, or the religion

CHAP. XV.

to which it belonged, immediately becomes the object of univerſal as well as invidious obſervation. In proportion to the ſmallneſs of its numbers, the character of the ſociety may be affected by the virtue and vices of the perſons who compoſe it; and every member is engaged to watch with the moſt vigilant attention over his own behaviour, and over that of his brethren, ſince, as he muſt expect to incur a part of the common diſgrace, he may hope to enjoy a ſhare of the common reputation. When the Chriſtians of Bithynia were brought before the tribunal of the younger Pliny, they aſſured the proconſul, that, far from being engaged in any unlawful conſpiracy, they were bound by a ſolemn obligation to abſtain from the commiſſion of thoſe crimes which diſturb the private or public peace of ſociety, from theft, robbery, adultery, perjury, and fraud [14]. Near a century afterwards, Tertullian, with an honeſt pride, could boaſt, that very few Chriſtians had ſuffered by the hand of the executioner, except on account of their religion [15]. Their ſerious and ſequeſtered life, averſe to the gay luxury of the age, inured them to chaſtity, temperance, œconomy, and all the ſober and domeſtic virtues. As the greater number were of ſome trade or profeſſion, it was incumbent on them, by the ſtricteſt integrity and the faireſt dealing, to remove the ſuſpicions which the profane are too apt to conceive againſt the appearances of ſanctity. The contempt of the world exerciſed them in the habits of humility, meekneſs, and patience. The

more they were perſecuted, the more cloſely they adhered to each other. Their mutual charity and unſuſpecting confidence has been remarked by infidels, and was too often abuſed by perfidious friends [86].

Morality of the fathers.

It is a very honourable circumſtance for the morals of the primitive Chriſtians, that even their faults, or rather errors, were derived from an exceſs of virtue. The biſhops and doctors of the church, whoſe evidence atteſts, and whoſe authority might influence, the profeſſions, the principles, and even the practice, of their contemporaries, had ſtudied the ſcriptures with leſs skill than devotion, and they often received, in the moſt literal ſenſe, thoſe rigid precepts of Chriſt and the apoſtles, to which the prudence of ſucceeding commentators has applied a looſer and more figurative mode of interpretation. Ambitious to exalt the perfection of the goſpel above the wiſdom of philoſophy, the zealous fathers have carried the duties of ſelf-mortification, of purity, and of patience, to a height which it is ſcarcely poſſible to attain, and much leſs to preſerve, in our preſent ſtate of weakneſs and corruption. A doctrine ſo extraordinary and ſo ſublime muſt inevitably command the veneration of the people; but it was ill calculated to obtain the ſuffrage of thoſe worldly philoſophers, who, in the conduct of this tranſitory life, conſult only the feelings of nature and the intereſt of ſociety [87].

Principles of human nature.

There are two very natural propenſities which we may diſtinguish in the moſt virtuous and

CHAP. XV.

liberal diſpoſitions, the love of pleaſure and the love of action. If the former is refined by art and learning, improved by the charms of ſocial intercourſe, and corrected by a juſt regard to œconomy, to health, and to reputation, it is productive of the greateſt part of the happineſs of private life. The love of action is a principle of a much ſtronger and more doubtful nature. It often leads to anger, to ambition, and to revenge; but when it is guided by the ſenſe of propriety and benevolence, it becomes the parent of every virtue; and if thoſe virtues are accompanied with equal abilities, a family, a ſtate, or an empire, may be indebted for their ſafety and proſperity to the undaunted courage of a ſingle man. To the love of pleaſure we may therefore aſcribe moſt of the agreeable, to the love of action we may attribute moſt of the uſeful and reſpectable, qualifications. The character in which both the one and the other ſhould be united and harmoniſed, would ſeem to conſtitute the moſt perfect idea of human nature. The inſenſible and inactive diſpoſition, which ſhould be ſuppoſed alike deſtitute of both, would be rejected, by the common conſent of mankind, as utterly incapable of procuring any happineſs to the individual, or any public benefit to the world. But it was not in *this* world that the primitive Chriſtians were deſirous of making themſelves either agreeable or uſeful.

The primitive Chriſtians condemn pleaſure and luxury.

The acquiſition of knowledge, the exerciſe of our reaſon or fancy, and the cheerful flow of unguarded converſation, may employ the leiſure of

a liberal mind. Such amuſements, however, were rejected with abhorrence, or admitted with the utmoſt caution, by the ſeverity of the fathers, who deſpiſed all knowledge that was not uſeful to ſalvation, and who conſidered all levity of diſcourſe as a criminal abuſe of the gift of ſpeech. In our preſent ſtate of exiſtence, the body is ſo inſeparably connected with the ſoul, that it ſeems to be our intereſt to taſte, with innocence and moderation, the enjoyments of which that faithful companion is ſuſceptible. Very different was the reaſoning of our devout predeceſſors; vainly aſpiring to imitate the perfection of angels, they diſdained, or they affected to diſdain, every earthly and corporeal delight [**]. Some of our ſenſes indeed are neceſſary for our preſervation, others for our ſubſiſtence, and others again for our information, and thus far it was impoſſible to reject the uſe of them. The firſt ſenſation of pleaſure was marked as the firſt moment of their abuſe. The unfeeling candidate for Heaven was inſtructed, not only to reſiſt the groſſer allurements of the taſte or ſmell, but even to ſhut his ears againſt the profane harmony of ſounds, and to view with indifference the moſt finiſhed productions of human art. Gay apparel, magnificent houſes, and elegant furniture, were ſuppoſed to unite the double guilt of pride and of ſenſuality: a ſimple and mortified appearance was more ſuitable to the Chriſtian who was certain of his ſins and doubtful of his ſalvation. In their cenſures of luxury, the fathers are extremely

CHAP. XV.

CHAP. XV.

minute and circumſtantial "; and among the various articles which excite their pious indignation, we may enumerate falſe hair, garments of any colour except white, inſtruments of muſic, vaſes of gold or ſilver, downy pillows (as Jacob repoſed his head on a ſtone), white bread, foreign wines, public ſalutations, the uſe of warm baths, and the practice of ſhaving the beard, which, according to the expreſſion of Tertullian, is a lie againſt our own faces, and an impious attempt to improve the works of the Creator ". When Chriſtianity was introduced among the rich and the polite, the obſervation of theſe ſingular laws was left, as it would be at preſent, to the few who were ambitious of ſuperior ſanctity. But it is always eaſy, as well as agreeable, for the inferior ranks of mankind to claim a merit from the contempt of that pomp and pleaſure, which fortune has placed beyond their reach. The virtue of the primitive Chriſtians, like that of the firſt Romans, was very frequently guarded by poverty and ignorance.

Their ſentiments concerning marriage and chaſtity.

The chaſte ſeverity of the fathers, in whatever related to the commerce of the two ſexes, flowed from the ſame principle; their abhorrence of every enjoyment, which might gratify the ſenſual, and degrade the ſpiritual, nature of man. It was their favourite opinion, that if Adam had preſerved his obedience to the Creator, he would have lived for ever in a ſtate of virgin purity, and that ſome harmleſs mode of vegetation might have peopled paradiſe with a race of innocent

and immortal beings [11]. The uſe of marriage was permitted only to his fallen poſterity, as a neceſſary expedient to continue the human ſpecies, and as a reſtraint, however imperfect, on the natural licentiouſneſs of deſire. The heſitation of the orthodox caſuiſts on this intereſting ſubject, betrays the perplexity of men, unwilling to approve an inſtitution, which they were compelled to tolerate [12]. The enumeration of the very whimſical laws, which they moſt circumſtantially impoſed on the marriage-bed, would force a ſmile from the young, and a blush from the fair. It was their unanimous ſentiment, that a firſt marriage was adequate to all the purpoſes of nature and of ſociety. The ſenſual connexion was refined into a reſemblance of the myſtic union of Chriſt with his church, and was pronounced to be indiſſoluble either by divorce or by death. The practice of ſecond nuptials was branded with the name of a legal adultery; and the perſons who were guilty of ſo ſcandalous an offence againſt Chriſtian purity, were ſoon excluded from the honours, and even from the alms, of the church [13]. Since deſire was imputed as a crime, and marriage was tolerated as a defect, it was conſiſtent with the ſame principles to conſider a ſtate of celibacy as the neareſt approach to the Divine perfection. It was with the utmoſt difficulty that ancient Rome could ſupport the inſtitution of ſix veſtals [14]; but the primitive church was filled with a great number of perſons of either ſex, who had devoted themſelves to the profeſſion of perpetual chaſtity [15]. A

CHAP. XV.

CHAP. XV.

few of theſe, among whom we may reckon the learned Origen, judged it the moſt prudent to diſarm the temper [n]. Some were inſenſible and ſome were invincible againſt the aſſaults of the flesh. Diſdaining an ignominious flight, the virgins of the warm climate of Africa encountered the enemy in the cloſeſt engagement; they permitted prieſts and deacons to share their bed, and gloried amidſt the flames in their unſullied purity. But inſulted Nature ſometimes vindicated her rights, and this new ſpecies of martyrdom ſerved only to introduce a new ſcandal into the church [o]. Among the Chriſtian aſcetics, however (a name which they ſoon acquired from their painful exerciſe), many, as they were leſs preſumptuous, were probably more ſucceſsful. The loſs of ſenſual pleaſure was ſupplied and compenſated by ſpiritual pride. Even the multitude of Pagans were inclined to eſtimate the merit of the ſacrifice by its apparent difficulty; and it was in the praiſe of theſe chaſte ſpouſes of Chriſt that the fathers have poured forth the troubled ſtream of their eloquence [p]. Such are the early traces of monaſtic principles and inſtitutions, which, in a ſubſequent age, have counterbalanced all the temporal advantages of Chriſtianity [q].

Their averſion to the buſineſs of war and government.

The Chriſtians were not leſs averſe to the buſineſs than to the pleaſures of this world. The defence of our perſons and property they knew not how to reconcile with the patient doctrine which enjoined an unlimited forgiveneſs of paſt injuries, and commanded them to invite the repe-

tition of fresh insults. Their simplicity was offended by the use of oaths, by the pomp of magistracy, and by the active contention of public life, nor could their humane ignorance be convinced, that it was lawful on any occasion to shed the blood of our fellow-creatures, either by the sword of justice, or by that of war; even though their criminal or hostile attempts should threaten the peace and safety of the whole community [100]. It was acknowledged, that, under a less perfect law, the powers of the Jewish constitution had been exercised, with the approbation of Heaven, by inspired prophets and by anointed kings. The Christians felt and confessed, that such institutions might be necessary for the present system of the world, and they cheerfully submitted to the authority of their Pagan governors. But while they inculcated the maxims of passive obedience, they refused to take any active part in the civil administration or the military defence of the empire. Some indulgence might perhaps be allowed to those persons who, before their conversion, were already engaged in such violent and sanguinary occupations [101]; but it was impossible that the Christians, without renouncing a more sacred duty, could assume the character of soldiers, of magistrates, or of princes [102]. This indolent, or even criminal disregard to the public welfare, exposed them to the contempt and reproaches of the Pagans, who very frequently asked, what must be the fate of the empire, attacked on every side by the barbarians, if all mankind should

CHAP. XV.

CHAP. XV.

adopt the puſillanimous ſentiments of the new ſect [103]? To this inſulting queſtion the Chriſtian apologiſts returned obſcure and ambiguous anſwers, as they were unwilling to reveal the ſecret cauſe of their ſecurity; the expectation that, before the converſion of mankind was accomplished, war, government, the Roman empire, and the world itſelf, would be no more. It may be obſerved, that, in this inſtance likewiſe, the ſituation of the firſt Chriſtians coincided very happily with their religious ſcruples, and that their averſion to an active life contributed rather to excuſe them from the ſervice, than to exclude them from the honours, of the ſtate and army.

THE FIFTH CAUSE. The Chriſtians active in the government of the church.

V. But the human character, however it may be exalted or depreſſed by a temporary enthuſiaſm, will return by degrees to its proper and natural level, and will reſume thoſe paſſions that ſeem the moſt adapted to its preſent condition. The primitive Chriſtians were dead to the buſineſs and pleaſures of the world; but their love of action, which could never be entirely extinguiſhed, ſoon revived, and found a new occupation in the government of the church. A ſeparate ſociety, which attacked the eſtabliſhed religion of the empire, was obliged to adopt ſome form of internal policy, and to appoint a ſufficient number of miniſters, intruſted not only with the ſpiritual functions, but even with the temporal direction of the Chriſtian commonwealth. The ſafety of that ſociety, its honour, its aggrandiſement, were productive, even in the moſt pious minds, of a

ſpirit of patriotiſm, ſuch as the firſt of the Romans had felt for the republic, and ſometimes, of a ſimilar indifference, in the uſe of whatever means might probably conduce to ſo deſirable an end. The ambition of raiſing themſelves or their friends to the honours and offices of the church, was diſguiſed by the laudable intention of devoting to the public benefit, the power and conſideration, which, for that purpoſe only, it became their duty to ſolicit. In the exerciſe of their functions, they were frequently called upon to detect the errors of hereſy, or the arts of faction, to oppoſe the deſigns of perfidious brethren, to ſtigmatize their characters with deſerved infamy, and to expel them from the boſom of a ſociety, whoſe peace and happineſs they had attempted to diſturb. The eccleſiaſtical governors of the Chriſtians were taught to unite the wiſdom of the ſerpent with the innocence of the dove; but as the former was refined, ſo the latter was inſenſibly corrupted, by the habits of government. In the church as well as in the world, the perſons who were placed in any public ſtation rendered themſelves conſiderable by their eloquence and firmneſs, by their knowledge of mankind, and by their dexterity in buſineſs; and while they concealed from others, and perhaps from themſelves, the ſecret motives of their conduct, they too frequently relapſed into all the turbulent paſſions of active life, which were tinctured with an additional degree of bitterneſs and obſtinacy from the infuſion of ſpiritual zeal.

CHAP. XIV. Its primitive freedom and equality.

The government of the church has often been the ſubject as well as the prize of religious contention. The hoſtile diſputants of Rome, of Paris, of Oxford, and of Geneva, have alike ſtruggled to reduce the primitive and apoſtolic model [104], to the reſpective ſtandards of their own policy. The few who have purſued this inquiry with more candour and impartiality, are of opinion [105], that the apoſtles, declined the office of legiſlation, and rather choſe to endure ſome partial ſcandals and diviſions, than to exclude the Chriſtians of a future age from the liberty of varying their forms of eccleſiaſtical government according to the changes of times and circumſtances. The ſcheme of policy, which, under their approbation, was adopted for the uſe of the firſt century, may be diſcovered from the practice of Jeruſalem, of Epheſus, or of Corinth. The ſocieties which were inſtituted in the cities of the Roman empire, were united only by the ties of faith and charity. Independence and equality formed the baſis of their internal conſtitution. The want of diſcipline and human learning was ſupplied by the occaſional aſſiſtance of the *prophets* [106], who were called to that function without diſtinction of age, of ſex, or of natural abilities, and who, as often as they felt the divine impulſe, poured forth the effuſions of the ſpirit in the aſſembly of the faithful. But theſe extraordinary gifts were frequently abuſed or miſapplied by the prophetic teachers. They diſplayed them at an improper ſeaſon, preſumptuously diſturbed the ſervice of the aſſembly,

and

and by their pride or miſtaken zeal they introduced, particularly into the apoſtolic church of Corinth, a long and melancholy train of diſorders [107]. As the inſtitution of prophets became uſeleſs, and even pernicious, their powers were withdrawn, and their office abolished. The public functions of religion were ſolely intruſted to the eſtabliſhed miniſters of the church, the *biſhops* and the *presbyters*; two appellations which, in their firſt origin, appear to have diſtinguiſhed the ſame office and the ſame order of perſons. The name of Presbyter was expreſſive of their age, or rather of their gravity and wiſdom. The title of Bishop denoted their inſpection over the faith and manners of the Chriſtians who were committed to their paſtoral care. In proportion to the reſpective numbers of the faithful, a larger or ſmaller number of theſe *epiſcopal presbyters* guided each infant congregation with equal authority, and with united counſels [108].

Inſtitution of biſhops as preſidents of the college of presbyters.

But the moſt perfect equality of freedom requires the directing hand of a ſuperior magiſtrate; and the order of public deliberations ſoon introduces the office of a preſident, inveſted at leaſt with the authority of collecting the ſentiments, and of executing the reſolutions, of the aſſembly. A regard for the public tranquillity, which would ſo frequently have been interrupted by annual or by occaſional elections, induced the primitive Chriſtians to inſtitute an honourable and perpetual magiſtracy, and to chooſe one of the wiſeſt and moſt holy among their presbyters to execute

CHAP. XV.

during his life, the duties of their eccleſiaſtical governor. It was under theſe circumſtances that the lofty title of Bishop began to raiſe itſelf above the humble appellation of presbyter; and while the latter remained the moſt natural diſtinction for the members of every Chriſtian ſenate, the former was appropriated to the dignity of its new preſident [109]. The advantages of this epiſcopal form of government, which appears to have been introduced before the end of the firſt century [110], were ſo obvious, and ſo important for the future greatneſs, as well as the preſent peace, of Chriſtianity, that it was adopted without delay by all the ſocieties which were already ſcattered over the empire, had acquired in a very early period the ſanction of antiquity [111]; and is ſtill revered by the moſt powerful churches, both of the Eaſt and of the Weſt, as a primitive and even as a divine eſtabliſhment [112]. It is needleſs to obſerve, that the pious and humble presbyters, who were firſt dignified with the epiſcopal title, could not poſſeſs, and would probably have rejected, the power and pomp which now encircles the tiara of the Roman pontiff, or the mitre of a German prelate. But we may define, in a few words, the narrow limits of their original juriſdiction, which was chiefly of a ſpiritual, though in ſome inſtances of a temporal, nature [113]. It conſiſted in the adminiſtration of the ſacraments and diſcipline of the church, the ſuperintendency of religious ceremonies, which imperceptibly increaſed in number and variety, the conſecration of eccleſiaſ-

tical miniſters, to whom the bishop aſſigned their reſpective functions, the management of the public fund, and the determination of all ſuch differences as the faithful were unwilling to expoſe before the tribunal of an idolatrous judge. Theſe powers, during a short period, were exerciſed according to the advice of the presbyteral college, and with the conſent and approbation of the aſſembly of Chriſtians. The primitive bishops were conſidered only as the firſt of their equals, and the honourable ſervants of a free people. Whenever the epiſcopal chair became vacant by death, a new preſident was choſen among the presbyters by the ſuffrage of the whole congregation, every member of which ſuppoſed himſelf inveſted with a ſacred and ſacerdotal character [114]. CHAP. XV.

Provincial councils.

Such was the mild and equal conſtitution by which the Chriſtians were governed more than an hundred years after the death of the apoſtles. Every ſociety formed within itſelf a ſeparate and independent republic: and although the moſt diſtant of theſe little ſtates maintained a mutual as well as friendly intercourſe of letters and deputations, the Chriſtian world was not yet connected by any ſupreme authority or legislative aſſembly. As the numbers of the faithful were gradually multiplied, they diſcovered the advantages that might reſult from a cloſer union of their intereſt and deſigns. Towards the end of the ſecond century, the churches of Greece and Aſia adopted the uſeful inſtitutions of provincial ſynods, and they may juſtly be ſuppoſed to have borrowed

CHAP. XV.

the model of a repreſentative council from the celebrated examples of their own country, the Amphictyons, the Achæan league, or the aſſemblies of the Ionian cities. It was ſoon eſtabliſhed as a cuſtom and as a law, that the biſhops of the independent churches ſhould meet in the capital of the province at the ſtated periods of ſpring and autumn. Their deliberations were aſſiſted by the advice of a few diſtinguiſhed preſbyters, and moderated by the preſence of a liſtening multitude [115]. Their decrees, which were ſtyled Canons, regulated every important controverſy of faith and diſcipline; and it was natural to believe that a liberal effuſion of the holy ſpirit would be poured on the united aſſembly of the delegates of the Chriſtian people. The inſtitution of ſynods was ſo well ſuited to private ambition and to public intereſt, that in the ſpace of a few years it was received throughout the whole empire. A regular correſpondence was eſtabliſhed between the provincial councils, which mutually communicated and approved their reſpective proceedings; and the catholic church ſoon aſſumed the form, and acquired the ſtrength, of a great fœderative republic [116].

Union of the church.

Progreſs of epiſcopal authority.

As the legislative authority of the particular churches was inſenſibly ſuperſeded by the uſe of councils, the biſhops obtained by their alliance a much larger ſhare of executive and arbitrary power; and as ſoon as they were connected by a ſenſe of their common intereſt, they were enabled to attack,

with united vigour, the original rights of their clergy and people. The prelates of the third century imperceptibly changed the language of exhortation into that of command, ſcattered the ſeeds of future uſurpations, and ſupplied, by ſcripture allegories and declamatory rhetoric, their deficiency of force and of reaſon. They exalted the unity and power of the church, as it was repreſented in the EPISCOPAL OFFICE, of which every bishop enjoyed an equal and undivided portion [117]. Princes and magiſtrates, it was often repeated, might boaſt an earthly claim to a tranſitory dominion: it was the epiſcopal authority alone which was derived from the deity, and extended itſelf over this and over another world. The bishops were the vicegerents of Chriſt, the ſucceſſors of the apoſtles, and the myſtic ſubſtitutes of the high prieſt of the Moſaic law. Their excluſive privilege of conferring the ſacerdotal character, invaded the freedom both of clerical and of popular elections; and if, in the adminiſtration of the church, they ſtill conſulted the judgment of the presbyters, or the inclination of the people, they moſt carefully inculcated the merit of ſuch a voluntary condeſcenſion. The bishops acknowledged the ſupreme authority which reſided in the aſſembly of their brethren; but in the government of his peculiar diocèſe, each of them exacted from his *flock* the ſame implicit obedience as if that favourite metaphor had been literally juſt, and as if the shepherd had been of a more exalted nature than that of his

CHAP. XV.

CHAP. XV.

sheep [118]. This obedience, however, was not impoſed without ſome efforts on one ſide, and ſome reſiſtance on the other. The democratical part of the conſtitution was, in many places, very warmly ſupported by the zealous or intereſted oppoſition of the inferior clergy. But their patriotiſm received the ignominious epithets of faction and ſchiſm; and the epiſcopal cauſe was indebted for its rapid progreſs to the labours of many active prelates, who, like Cyprian of Carthage, could reconcile the arts of the moſt ambitious ſtateſman with the Chriſtian virtues which ſeem adapted to the character of a ſaint and martyr [119].

Pre-eminence of the metropolitan churches.

The ſame cauſes which at firſt had deſtroyed the equality of the presbyters, introduced among the bishops a pre-eminence of rank, and from thence a ſuperiority of juriſdiction. As often as in the ſpring and autumn they met in provincial ſynod, the difference of perſonal merit and reputation was very ſenſibly felt among the members of the aſſembly, and the multitude was governed by the wiſdom and eloquence of the few. But the order of public proceedings required a more regular and leſs invidious diſtinction; the office of perpetual preſidents in the councils of each province, was conferred on the bishops of the principal city, and theſe aſpiring prelates, who ſoon acquired the lofty titles of Metropolitans and Primates, ſecretly prepared themſelves to uſurp over their epiſcopal brethren the ſame authority which the bishops had ſo lately aſſumed above the college of presbyters [120]. Nor was it

long before an emulation of pre-eminence and power prevailed among the metropolitans themſelves, each of them affecting to diſplay, in the moſt pompous terms, the temporal honours and advantages of the city over which he preſided; the numbers and opulence of the Chriſtians, who were ſubject to their paſtoral care; the ſaints and martyrs who had ariſen among them, and the purity with which they preſerved the tradition of the faith, as it had been tranſmitted through a ſeries of orthodox bishops from the apoſtle or the apoſtolic diſciple, to whom the foundation of their church was aſcribed [121]. From every cauſe either of a civil or of an eccleſiaſtical nature, it was eaſy to foreſee that Rome muſt enjoy the reſpect, and would ſoon claim the obedience, of the provinces. The ſociety of the faithful bore a juſt proportion to the capital of the empire; and the Roman church was the greateſt, the moſt numerous, and, in regard to the Weſt, the moſt ancient of all the Chriſtian eſtabliſhments, many of which had received their religion from the pious labours of her miſſionaries. Inſtead of *one* apoſtolic founder, the utmoſt boaſt of Antioch, of Epheſus, or of Corinth, the banks of the Tyber were ſuppoſed to have been honoured with the preaching and martyrdom of the *two* moſt eminent among the apoſtles [122]; and the biſhops of Rome very prudently claimed the inheritance of whatſoever prerogatives were attributed either to the perſon or to the office of St. Peter [123]. The biſhops of Italy, and of the provinces were diſpoſed to allow them

CHAP. XV.

Ambition of the Roman pontiff.

CHAP. XV.

a primacy of order and aſſociation (ſuch was their very accurate expreſſion) in the Chriſtian ariſtocracy [124]. But the power of a monarch was rejected with abhorrence, and the aſpiring genius of Rome experienced from the nations of Aſia and Africa, a more vigorous reſiſtance to her ſpiritual, than she had formerly done to her temporal, dominion. The patriotic Cyprian, who ruled with the moſt abſolute ſway the church of Carthage and the provincial ſynods, oppoſed with reſolution and ſucceſs the ambition of the Roman pontiff, artfully connected his own cauſe with that of the eaſtern bishops, and, like Hannibal, ſought out new allies in the heart of Aſia [125]. If this Punic war was carried on without any effuſion of blood, it was owing much leſs to the moderation than to the weakneſs of the contending prelates. Invectives and excommunications were *their* only weapons; and theſe, during the progreſs of the whole controverſy, they hurled againſt each other with equal fury and devotion. The hard neceſſity of cenſuring either a pope, or a ſaint and martyr, diſtreſſes the modern catholics, whenever they are obliged to relate the particulars of a diſpute, in which the champions of religion indulged ſuch paſſions as ſeem much more adapted to the ſenate or to the camp [126].

Laity and clergy.

The progreſs of the eccleſiaſtical authority gave birth to the memorable diſtinction of the laity and of the clergy, which had been unknown to the Greeks and Romans [127]. The former of theſe appellations comprehended the body of the Chriſ-

tian people; the latter, according to the signification of the word, was appropriated to the chosen portion that had been set apart for the service of religion; a celebrated order of men which has furnished the most important, though not always the most edifying, subjects for modern history. Their mutual hostilities sometimes disturbed the peace of the infant church, but their zeal and activity were united in the common cause, and the love of power, which (under the most artful disguises) could insinuate itself into the breasts of bishops and martyrs, animated them to increase the number of their subjects, and to enlarge the limits of the Christian empire. They were destitute of any temporal force, and they were for a long time discouraged and oppressed, rather than assisted, by the civil magistrate; but they had acquired, and they employed within their own society, the two most efficacious instruments of government, rewards and punishments; the former derived from the pious liberality, the latter from the devout apprehensions, of the faithful. CHAP. XV.

Oblations and revenue of the church.

I. The community of goods, which had so agreeably amused the imagination of Plato [128], and which subsisted in some degree among the austere sect of the Essenians [129], was adopted for a short time in the primitive church. The fervour of the first proselytes prompted them to sell those worldly possessions, which they despised, to lay the price of them at the feet of the apostles, and to content themselves with receiving an equal share out of the general distribution [130]. The progress of the

CHAP. XV.

Chriſtian religion relaxed, and gradually abolished this generous inſtitution, which, in hands leſs pure than thoſe of the apoſtles, would too ſoon have been corrupted and abuſed by the returning ſelfiſhneſs of human nature; and the converts who embraced the new religion were permitted to retain the poſſeſſion of their patrimony, to receive legacies and inheritances, and to increaſe their ſeparate property by all the lawful means of trade and induſtry. Inſtead of an abſolute ſacrifice, a moderate proportion was accepted by the miniſters of the goſpel; and in their weekly or monthly aſſemblies, every believer, according to the exigency of the occaſion, and the meaſure of his wealth and piety, preſented his voluntary offering for the uſe of the common fund [131]. Nothing, however inconſiderable, was refuſed; but it was diligently inculcated, that, in the article of Tythes, the Moſaic law was ſtill of divine obligation; and that ſince the Jews, under a leſs perfect diſcipline, had been commanded to pay a tenth part of all that they poſſeſſed, it would become the diſciples of Chriſt to diſtinguish themſelves by a ſuperior degree of liberality [132], and to acquire ſome merit by reſigning a ſuperfluous treaſure, which muſt ſo ſoon be annihilated with the world itſelf [133]. It is almoſt unneceſſary to obſerve, that the revenue of each particular church, which was of ſo uncertain and fluctuating a nature, muſt have varied with the poverty or the opulence of the faithful, as they were diſperſed in obſcure villages, or collected in the great cities

of the empire. In the time of the emperor Decius, it was the opinion of the magiſtrates, that the Chriſtians of Rome were poſſeſſed of very conſiderable wealth; that veſſels of gold and ſilver were uſed in their religious worship, and that many among their proſelytes had ſold their lands and houſes to increaſe the public riches of the ſect, at the expence, indeed, of their unfortunate children, who found themſelves beggars, becauſe their parents had been ſaints [134]. We ſhould liſten with diſtruſt to the ſuſpicions of ſtrangers and enemies: on this occaſion, however, they receive a very ſpecious and probable colour from the two following circumſtances, the only ones that have reached our knowledge, which define any preciſe ſums, or convey any diſtinct idea. Almoſt at the ſame period, the bishop of Carthage, from a ſociety leſs opulent than that of Rome, collected an hundred thouſand ſeſterces (above eight hundred and fifty pounds ſterling), on a ſudden call of charity to redeem the brethren of Numidia, who had been carried away captives by the barbarians of the deſert [135]. About an hundred years before the reign of Decius, the Roman church had received, in a ſingle donation, the ſum of two hundred thouſand ſeſterces from a ſtranger of Pontus, who propoſed to fix his reſidence in the capital [136]. Theſe oblations, for the moſt part, were made in money; nor was the ſociety of Chriſtians either deſirous or capable of acquiring, to any conſiderable degree, the incumbrance of landed property. It had been provided by ſeveral

CHAP. XV.

CHAP. XV.

laws, which were enacted with the ſame deſign as our ſtatutes of mortmain, that no real eſtates ſhould be given or bequeathed to any corporate body, without either a ſpecial privilege or a particular diſpenſation from the emperor or from the ſenate [137]; who were ſeldom diſpoſed to grant them in favour of a ſect, at firſt the object of their contempt, and at laſt of their fears and jealouſy. A tranſaction however is related under the reign of Alexander Severus, which diſcovers that the reſtraint was ſometimes eluded or ſuſpended, and that the Chriſtians were permitted to claim and to poſſeſs lands within the limits of Rome itſelf [138]. The progreſs of Chriſtianity, and the civil confuſion of the empire, contributed to relax the ſeverity of the laws, and before the cloſe of the third century many conſiderable eſtates were beſtowed on the opulent churches of Rome, Milan, Carthage, Antioch, Alexandria, and the other great cities of Italy and the provinces.

Diſtribution of the revenue.

The biſhop was the natural ſteward of the church; the public ſtock was intruſted to his care without account or controul, the presbyters were confined to their ſpiritual functions, and the more dependent order of deacons was ſolely employed in the management and diſtribution of the eccleſiaſtical revenue [139]. If we may give credit to the vehement declamations of Cyprian, there were too many among his African brethren, who, in the execution of their charge, violated every precept, not only of evangelic perfection, but even of moral virtue. By ſome of theſe unfaithful

ſtewards the riches of the church were laviſhed in ſenſual pleaſures, by others they were perverted to the purpoſes of private gain, of fraudulent purchaſes, and of rapacious uſury [140]. But as long as the contributions of the Chriſtian people were free and unconſtrained, the abuſe of their confidence could not be very frequent, and the general uſes to which their liberality was applied, reflected honour on the religious ſociety. A decent portion was reſerved for the maintenance of the biſhop and his clergy; a ſufficient ſum was allotted for the expences of the public worſhip, of which the feaſts of love, the *agapæ*, as they were called, conſtituted a very pleaſing part. The whole remainder was the ſacred patrimony of the poor. According to the diſcretion of the biſhop, it was diſtributed to ſupport widows and orphans, the lame, the ſick, and the aged of the community; to comfort ſtrangers and pilgrims, and to alleviate the misfortunes of priſoners and captives, more eſpecially when their ſufferings had been occaſioned by their firm attachment to the cauſe of religion [141]. A generous intercourſe of charity united the moſt diſtant provinces, and the ſmaller congregations were cheerfully aſſiſted by the alms of their more opulent brethren [142]. Such an inſtitution, which paid leſs regard to the merit than to the diſtreſs of the object, very materially conduced to the progreſs of Chriſtianity. The Pagans, who were actuated by a ſenſe of humanity, while they derided the doctrines, acknowledged the benevolence, of the new ſect [143].

CHAP. XV.

The proſpect of immediate relief and of future protection allured into its hoſpitable boſom many of thoſe unhappy perſons whom the neglect of the world would have abandoned to the miſeries of want, of ſickneſs, and of old age. There is ſome reaſon likewiſe to believe, that great numbers of infants, who, according to the inhuman practice of the times, had been expoſed by their parents, were frequently reſcued from death, baptiſed, educated, and maintained by the piety of the Chriſtians, and at the expence of the public treaſure [144].

Excommunication.

II. It is the undoubted right of every ſociety to exclude from its communion and benefits, ſuch among its members as reject or violate thoſe regulations which have been eſtabliſhed by general conſent. In the exerciſe of this power, the cenſures of the Chriſtian church were chiefly directed againſt ſcandalous ſinners, and particularly thoſe who were guilty of murder, of fraud, or of incontinence; againſt the authors, or the followers of any heretical opinions which had been condemned by the judgment of the epiſcopal order; and againſt thoſe unhappy perſons, who, whether from choice or from compulſion, had polluted themſelves after their baptiſm by any act of idolatrous worſhip. The conſequences of excommunication were of a temporal as well as a ſpiritual nature. The Chriſtian againſt whom it was pronounced, was deprived of any part in the oblations of the faithful. The ties both of religious and of private friendſhip were diſſolved:

he found himself a profane object of abhorrence to the persons whom he the most esteemed, or by whom he had been the most tenderly beloved; and as far as an expulsion from a respectable society could imprint on his character a mark of disgrace, he was shunned or suspected by the generality of mankind. The situation of these unfortunate exiles was in itself very painful and melancholy; but, as it usually happens, their apprehensions far exceeded their sufferings. The benefits of the Christian communion were those of eternal life, nor could they erase from their minds the awful opinion, that to those ecclesiastical governors by whom they were condemned, the Deity had committed the keys of Hell and of Paradise. The heretics, indeed, who might be supported by the consciousness of their intentions, and by the flattering hope that they alone had discovered the true path of salvation, endeavoured to regain, in their separate assemblies, those comforts, temporal as well as spiritual, which they no longer derived from the great society of Christians. But almost all those who had reluctantly yielded to the power of vice or idolatry, were sensible of their fallen condition, and anxiously desirous of being restored to the benefits of the Christian communion. CHAP. XV.

With regard to the treatment of these penitents, two opposite opinions, the one of justice, the other of mercy, divided the primitive church. The more rigid and inflexible casuists refused them for ever, and without exception, the meanest

CHAP. XV.

place in the holy community, which they had disgraced or deserted, and leaving them to the remorse of a guilty conscience, indulged them only with a faint ray of hope, that the contrition of their life and death might possibly be accepted by the Supreme Being [145]. A milder sentiment was embraced in practice as well as in theory, by the purest and most respectable of the Christian churches [146]. The gates of reconciliation and of Heaven were seldom shut against the returning penitent; but a severe and solemn form of discipline was instituted, which, while it served to expiate his crime, might powerfully deter the spectators from the imitation of his example.

Public penance.

Humbled by a public confession, emaciated by fasting, and clothed in sackcloth, the penitent lay prostrate at the door of the assembly, imploring with tears the pardon of his offences, and soliciting the prayers of the faithful [147]. If the fault was of a very heinous nature, whole years of penance were esteemed an inadequate satisfaction to the Divine Justice; and it was always by slow and painful gradations that the sinner, the heretic, or the apostate, was re-admitted into the bosom of the church. A sentence of perpetual excommunication was, however, reserved for some crimes of an extraordinary magnitude, and particularly for the inexcusable relapses of those penitents who had already experienced and abused the clemency of their ecclesiastical superiors. According to the circumstances or the number of the guilty, the exercise of the Christian discipline was varied by the

the diſcretion of the bishops. The councils of Ancyra and Illiberis were held about the ſame time, the one in Galatia, the other in Spain; but their reſpective canons, which are ſtill extant, ſeem to breathe a very different ſpirit. The Galatian, who after his baptiſm had repeatedly ſacrificed to idols, might obtain his pardon by a penance of ſeven years, and if he had ſeduced others to imitate his example, only three years more were added to the term of his exile. But the unhappy Spaniard, who had committed the ſame offence, was deprived of the hope of reconciliation, even in the article of death; and his idolatry was placed at the head of a liſt of ſeventeen other crimes, againſt which a ſentence no leſs terrible was pronounced. Among theſe we may diſtinguish the inexpiable guilt of calumniating a bishop, a presbyter, or even a deacon [148].

The dignity of epiſcopal government.

The well-tempered mixture of liberality and rigour, the judicious diſpenſation of rewards and punishments, according to the maxims of policy as well as juſtice, conſtituted the *human* ſtrength of the church. The bishops, whoſe paternal care extended itſelf to the government of both worlds, were ſenſible of the importance of theſe prerogatives, and covering their ambition with the fair pretence of the love of order, they were jealous of any rival in the exerciſe of a diſcipline ſo neceſſary to prevent the deſertion of thoſe troops which had inliſted themſelves under the banner of the croſs, and whoſe numbers every day became

CHAP. XV.

more conſiderable. From the imperious declamations of Cyprian, we ſhould naturally conclude, that the doctrines of excommunication and penance formed the moſt eſſential part of religion; and that it was much leſs dangerous for the diſciples of Chriſt to neglect the obſervance of the moral duties, than to deſpiſe the cenſures and authority of their biſhops. Sometimes we might imagine that we were liſtening to the voice of Moſes, when he commanded the earth to open, and to ſwallow up, in conſuming flames, the rebellious race which refuſed obedience to the prieſthood of Aaron; and we ſhould ſometimes ſuppoſe that we heard a Roman conſult aſſerting the majeſty of the republic, and declaring his inflexible reſolution to enforce the rigour of the laws. „ If ſuch irregularities are ſuffered with „ impunity (it is thus that the biſhop of Carthage „ chides the lenity of his colleague), if ſuch irre- „ gularities are ſuffered, there is an end of EPIS- „ COPAL VIGOUR [149]; an end of the ſublime and „ divine power of governing the church, an end „ of Chriſtianity itſelf. " Cyprian had renounced thoſe temporal honours, which it is probable he would never have obtained; but the acquiſition of ſuch abſolute command over the conſciences and underſtanding of a congregation, however obſcure or deſpiſed by the world, is more truly grateful to the pride of the human heart, than the poſſeſſion of the moſt deſpotic power, impoſed by arms and conqueſt on a reluctant people.

CHAP. XV. Recapitulation of the five cauſes.

In the courſe of this important, though perhaps tedious, inquiry, I have attempted to diſplay the ſecondary cauſes which ſo efficaciously aſſiſted the truth of the Chriſtian religion. If among theſe cauſes we have diſcovered any artificial ornaments, any accidental circumſtances, or any mixture of error and paſſion, it cannot appear ſurpriſing that mankind ſhould be the moſt ſenſibly affected by ſuch motives as were ſuited to their imperfect nature. It was by the aid of theſe cauſes, excluſive zeal, the immediate expectation of another world, the claim of miracles, the practice of rigid virtue, and the conſtitution of the primitive church, that Chriſtianity ſpread itſelf with ſo much ſucceſs in the Roman empire. To the firſt of theſe the Chriſtians were indebted for their invincible valour, which diſdained to capitulate with the enemy whom they were reſolved to vanquiſh. The three ſucceeding cauſes ſupplied their valour with the moſt formidable arms. The laſt of theſe cauſes united their courage, directed their arms, and gave their efforts that irreſiſtible weight, which even a ſmall band of well-trained and intrepid volunteers has ſo often poſſeſſed over an undiſciplined multitude, ignorant of the ſubject, and careleſs of the event of the war. In the various religions of Polytheiſm, ſome wandering fanatics of Egypt and Syria, who addreſſed themſelves to the credulous ſuperſtition of the populace, were perhaps the only order of prieſts [156] that derived their whole ſupport and credit from their ſacerdotal

Weakneſs of polytheiſm.

CHAP. XV.

profeſſion, and were very deeply affected by a perſonal concern for the ſafety or proſperity of their tutelar deities. The miniſters of polytheiſm, both in Rome and in the provinces, were, for the moſt part, men of a noble birth, and of an affluent fortune, who received, as an honourable diſtinction, the care of a celebrated temple, or of a public ſacrifice, exhibited, very frequently at their own expence, the ſacred games [151], and with cold indifference performed the ancient rites, according to the laws and faſhion of their country. As they were engaged in the ordinary occupations of life, their zeal and devotion were ſeldom animated by a ſenſe of intereſt, or by the habits of an eccleſiaſtical character. Confined to their reſpective temples and cities, they remained without any connexion of diſcipline or government; and whilſt they acknowledged the ſupreme juriſdiction of the ſenate, of the college of pontiffs, and of the emperor, thoſe civil magiſtrates contented themſelves with the eaſy task of maintaining, in peace and dignity, the general worſhip of mankind. We have already ſeen how various, how looſe, and how uncertain were the religious ſentiments of Polytheiſts. They were abandoned, almoſt without controul, to the natural workings of a ſuperſtitious fancy. The accidental circumſtances of their life and ſituation determined the object as well as the degree of their devotion; and as long as their adoration was ſucceſſively proſtituted to a thouſand deities, it was ſcarcely poſſible that their hearts could be ſuſceptible

of a very ſincere or lively paſſion for any of them.

The ſcepticiſm of the Pagan world proved favourable to the new religion.

When Chriſtianity appeared in the world, even theſe faint and imperfect impreſſions had loſt much of their original power. Human reaſon, which by its unaſſiſted ſtrength is incapable of perceiving the myſteries of faith, had already obtained an eaſy triumph over the folly of Paganiſm; and when Tertullian or Lactantius employ their labours in expoſing its falſehood and extravagance, they are obliged to tranſcribe the eloquence of Cicero or the wit of Lucian. The contagion of theſe ſceptical writings had been diffuſed far beyond the number of their readers. The faſhion of incredulity was communicated from the philoſopher to the man of pleaſure or buſineſs, from the noble to the plebeian, and from the maſter to the menial ſlave who waited at his table, and who eagerly liſtened to the freedom of his converſation. On public occaſions the philoſophic part of mankind affected to treat with reſpect and decency the religious inſtitutions of their country; but their ſecret contempt penetrated through the thin and awkward diſguiſe, and even the people, when they diſcovered that their deities were rejected and derided by thoſe whoſe rank or underſtanding they were accuſtomed to reverence, were filled with doubts and apprehenſions concerning the truth of thoſe doctrines, to which they had yielded the moſt implicit belief. The decline of ancient prejudice expoſed a very numerous portion of

CHAP. XV.

human kind to the danger of a painful and comfortleſs ſituation. A ſtate of ſcepticiſm and ſuſpenſe may amuſe a few inquiſitive minds. But the practice of ſuperſtition is ſo congenial to the multitude, that if they are forcibly awakened, they ſtill regret the loſs of their pleaſing viſion. Their love of the marvellous and ſupernatural, their curioſity with regard to future events, and their ſtrong propenſity to extend their hopes and fears beyond the limits of the viſible world, were the principal cauſes which favoured the eſtabliſhment of Polytheiſm. So urgent on the vulgar is the neceſſity of believing, that the fall of any ſyſtem of mythology will moſt probably be ſucceeded by the introduction of ſome other mode of ſuperſtition. Some deities of a more recent and faſhionable caſt might ſoon have occupied the deſerted temples of Jupiter and Apollo, if, in the deciſive moment, the wiſdom of Providence had not interpoſed a genuine revelation, fitted to inſpire the moſt rational eſteem and conviction, whilſt, at the ſame time, it was adorned with all that could attract the curioſity, the wonder, and the veneration of the people. In their actual diſpoſition, as many were almoſt diſengaged from their artificial prejudices, but equally ſuſceptible and deſirous of a devout attachment; an object much leſs deſerving would have been ſufficient to fill the vacant place in their hearts, and to gratify the uncertain eagerneſs of their paſſions. Thoſe who are inclined to purſue this reflection, inſtead of viewing with aſtoniſhment the rapid

progreſs of Chriſtianity, will perhaps be ſurpriſed that its ſucceſs was not ſtill more rapid and ſtill more univerſal. CHAP. XV.

as well as the peace and union of the Roman empire.

It has been obſerved, with truth as well as propriety, that the conqueſts of Rome prepared and facilitated thoſe of Chriſtianity. In the ſecond chapter of this work we have attempted to explain in what manner the moſt civilized provinces of Europe, Aſia, and Africa, were united under the dominion of one ſovereign, and gradually connected by the moſt intimate ties of laws, of manners, and of language. The Jews of Paleſtine, who had fondly expected a temporal deliverer, gave ſo cold a reception to the miracles of the divine prophet, that it was found unneceſſary to publish, or at leaſt to preſerve, any Hebrew goſpel [152]. The authentic hiſtories of the actions of Chriſt were compoſed in the Greek language, at a conſiderable diſtance from Jeruſalem, and after the Gentile converts were grown extremely numerous [153]. As ſoon as thoſe hiſtories were translated into the Latin tongue, they were perfectly intelligible to all the ſubjects of Rome, excepting only to the peaſants of Syria and Egypt, for whoſe benefit particular verſions were afterwards made. The public highways, which had been conſtructed for the uſe of the legions, opened an eaſy paſſage for the Chriſtian miſſionaries from Damaſcus to Corinth, and from Italy to the extremity of Spain or Britain; nor did thoſe ſpiritual conquerors encounter any of the obſtacles which uſually retard or prevent

CHAP. XV.

the introduction of a foreign religion into a diſtant country. There is the ſtrongeſt reaſon to believe, that before the reigns of Diocletian and Conſtantine, the faith of Chriſt had been preached in every province, and in all the great cities of the empire; but the foundation of the ſeveral congregations, the numbers of the faithful who compoſed them, and their proportion to the unbelieving multitude, are now buried in obſcurity, or diſguiſed by fiction and declamation. Such imperfect circumſtances, however, as have reached our knowledge concerning the increaſe of the Chriſtian name in Aſia and Greece, in Egypt, in Italy, and in the Weſt, we ſhall now proceed to relate, without neglecting the real or imaginary acquiſitions which lay beyond the frontiers of the Roman empire.

Hiſtorical view of the progreſs of Chriſtianity

In the Eaſt.

The rich provinces that extend from the Euphrates to the Ionian ſea, were the principal theatre on which the apoſtle of the Gentiles diſplayed his zeal and piety. The ſeeds of the goſpel, which he had ſcattered in a fertile ſoil, were diligently cultivated by his diſciples; and it ſhould ſeem that, during the two firſt centuries, the moſt conſiderable body of Chriſtians was contained within thoſe limits. Among the ſocieties which were inſtituted in Syria, none were more ancient or more illuſtrious than thoſe of Damaſcus, of Berea or Aleppo, and of Antioch. The prophetic introduction of the Apocalypſe has deſcribed and immortaliſed the ſeven churches of Aſia; Epheſus, Smyrna, Pergamus, Thya-

tira [154], Sardes, Laodicea, and Philadelphia; and their colonies were ſoon diffuſed over that populous country. In a very early period, the islands of Cyprus and Crete, the provinces of Thrace and Macedonia, gave a favourable reception to the new religion; and Chriſtian republics were ſoon founded in the cities of Corinth, of Sparta, and of Athens [155]. The antiquity of the Greek and Aſiatic churches allowed a ſufficient ſpace of time for their increaſe and multiplication, and even the ſwarms of Gnoſtics and other heretics ſerve to diſplay the flouriſhing condition of the orthodox church, ſince the appellation of heretics has always been applied to the leſs numerous party. To theſe domeſtic teſtimonies we may add the confeſſion, the complaints, and the apprehenſions of the Gentiles themſelves. From the writings of Lucian, a philoſopher who had ſtudied mankind, and who deſcribes their manners in the moſt lively colours, we may learn, that, under the reign of Commodus, his native country of Pontus was filled with Epicureans and *Chriſtians* [156]. Within fourſcore years after the death of Chriſt [157], the humane Pliny laments the magnitude of the evil which he vainly attempted to eradicate. In his very curious epiſtle to the emperor Trajan, he affirms, that the temples were almoſt deſerted, that the ſacred victims ſcarcely found any purchaſers, and that the ſuperſtition had not only infected the cities, but had even ſpread itſelf into the villages and the open country of Pontus and Bithynia [158].

CHAP. XV. The church of Antioch.

Without deſcending into a minute ſcrutiny of the expreſſions, or of the motives of thoſe writers who either celebrate or lament the progreſs of Chriſtianity in the Eaſt, it may in general be obſerved, that none of them have left us any grounds from whence a juſt eſtimate might be formed of the real numbers of the faithful in thoſe provinces. One circumſtance, however, has been fortunately preſerved, which ſeems to caſt a more diſtinct light on this obſcure but intereſting ſubject. Under the reign of Theodoſius, after Chriſtianity had enjoyed, during more than ſixty years, the ſunſhine of Imperial favour, the ancient and illuſtrious church of Antioch conſiſted of one hundred thouſand perſons, three thouſand of whom were ſupported out of the public oblations [159]. The ſplendour and dignity of the queen of the Eaſt, the acknowledged populouſneſs of Cæſarea, Seleucia, and Alexandria, and the deſtruction of two hundred and fifty thouſand ſouls in the earthquake which afflicted Antioch under the elder Juſtin [160], are ſo many convincing proofs that the whole number of its inhabitants was not leſs than half a million, and that the Chriſtians, however multiplied by zeal and power, did not exceed a fifth part of that great city. How different a proportion muſt we adopt when we compare the perſecuted with the triumphant church, the Weſt with the Eaſt, remote villages with populous towns, and countries recently converted to the faith, with the place where the believers firſt received the

appellation of Chriſtians! It muſt not, however, be diſſembled, that, in another paſſage, Chryſoſtom, to whom we are indebted for this uſeful information, computes the multitude of the faithful as even ſuperior to that of the Jews and Pagans [161]. But the ſolution of this apparent difficulty is eaſy and obvious. The eloquent preacher draws a parallel between the civil and the eccleſiaſtical conſtitution of Antioch; between the liſt of Chriſtians who had acquired Heaven by baptiſm, and the liſt of citizens who had a right to ſhare the public liberality. Slaves, ſtrangers, and infants were compriſed in the former; they were excluded from the latter. CHAP. XV.

The extenſive commerce of Alexandria, and its proximity to Paleſtine, gave an eaſy entrance to the new religion. It was at firſt embraced by great numbers of the Therapeutæ, or Eſſenians of the lake Mareotis, a Jewish ſect which had abated much of its reverence for the Moſaic ceremonies. The auſtere life of the Eſſenians, their faſts and excommunications, the community of goods, the love of celibacy, their zeal for martyrdom, and the warmth though not the purity of their faith, already offered a very lively image of the primitive diſcipline [162]. It was in the ſchool of Alexandria that the Chriſtian theology appears to have aſſumed a regular and ſcientifical form; and when Hadrian viſited Egypt, he found a church compoſed of Jews and of Greeks, ſufficiently important to attract the notice of that inquiſitive prince [163]. But the pro- In Egypt.

CHAP. XV.

greſs of Chriſtianity was for a long time confined within the limits of a ſingle city, which was itſelf a foreign colony, and till the cloſe of the ſecond century the predeceſſors of Demetrius were the only prelates of the Egyptian church. Three bishops were conſecrated by the hands of Demetrius, and the number was increaſed to twenty by his ſucceſſor Heraclas [164]. The body of the natives, a people diſtinguished by a ſullen inflexibility of temper [165], entertained the new doctrine with coldneſs and reluctance: and even in the time of Origen, it was rare to meet with an Egyptian who had ſurmounted his early prejudices in favour of the ſacred animals of his country [166]. As ſoon, indeed, as Chriſtianity aſcended the throne, the zeal of thoſe barbarians obeyed the prevailing impulſion; the cities of Egypt were filled with bishops, and the deſerts of Thebais ſwarmed with hermits.

In Rome.

A perpetual ſtream of ſtrangers and provincials flowed into the capacious boſom of Rome. Whatever was ſtrange or odious, whoever was guilty or ſuſpected, might hope, in the obſcurity of that immenſe capital, to elude the vigilance of the law. In ſuch a various conflux of nations, every teacher, either of truth or of falſehood, every founder, whether of a virtuous or a criminal aſſociation, might eaſily multiply his diſciples or accomplices. The Chriſtians of Rome, at the time of the accidental perſecution of Nero, are repreſented by Tacitus as already amounting to a very great multitude [167], and the lan-

guage of that great hiſtorian is almoſt ſimilar to the ſtyle employed by Livy, when he relates the introduction and the ſuppreſſion of the rites of Bacchus. After the Bacchanals had awakened the ſeverity of the ſenate, it was likewiſe apprehended that a very great multitude, as it were *another people*, had been initiated into thoſe abhorred myſteries. A more careful inquiry ſoon demonſtrated, that the offenders did not exceed ſeven thouſand; a number indeed ſufficiently alarming, when conſidered as the object of public juſtice [168]. It is with the ſame candid allowance that we ſhould interpret the vague expreſſions of Tacitus, and in a former inſtance of Pliny, when they exaggerate the crowds of deluded fanatics who had forſaken the eſtabliſhed worſhip of the gods. The church of Rome was undoubtedly the firſt and moſt populous of the empire; and we are poſſeſſed of an authentic record which atteſts the ſtate of religion in that city about the middle of the third century, and after a peace of thirty-eight years. The clergy, at that time, conſiſted of a biſhop, forty-ſix preſbyters, ſeven deacons, as many ſub-deacons, forty-two acolythes, and fifty readers, exorciſts, and porters. The number of widows, of the infirm, and of the poor, who were maintained by the oblations of the faithful, amounted to fifteen hundred [169]. From reaſon, as well as from the analogy of Antioch, we may venture to eſtimate the Chriſtians of Rome at about fifty thouſand. The populouſneſs of that great capital cannot perhaps be exactly aſcertained; but the moſt

CHAP. XV.

CHAP. XV.

modeſt calculation will not ſurely reduce it lower than a million of inhabitants, of whom the Chriſtians might conſtitute at the moſt a twentieth part [170].

In Africa and the weſtern provinces.

The weſtern provincials appeared to have derived the knowledge of Chriſtianity from the ſame ſource which had diffuſed among them the language, the ſentiments, and the manners of Rome. In this more important circumſtance, Africa, as well as Gaul, was gradually faſhioned to the imitation of the capital. Yet notwithſtanding the many favourable occaſions which might invite the Roman miſſionaries to viſit their Latin provinces, it was late before they paſſed either the ſea or the Alps [171]; nor can we diſcover in thoſe great countries any aſſured traces either of faith or of perſecution that aſcend higher than the reign of the Antonines [172]. The ſlow progreſs of the goſpel in the cold climate of Gaul, was extremely different from the eagerneſs with which it ſeems to have been received on the burning ſands of Africa. The African Chriſtians ſoon formed one of the principal members of the primitive church. The practice introduced into that province, of appointing bishops to the moſt inconſiderable towns, and very frequently to the moſt obſcure villages, contributed to multiply the ſplendour and importance of their religious ſocieties, which during the courſe of the third century were animated by the zeal of Tertullian, directed by the abilities of Cyprian, and adorned by the eloquence of Lactantius. But if, on the contrary, we turn

our eyes towards Gaul, we muſt content ourſelves with diſcovering, in the time of Marcus Antoninus, the feeble and united congregations of Lyons and Vienna; and even as late as the reign of Decius, we are aſſured, that in a few cities only, Arles, Narbonne, Thouloufe, Limoges, Clermont, Tours, and Paris, ſome ſcattered churches were ſupported by the devotion of a ſmall number of Chriſtians [173]. Silence is indeed very conſiſtent with devotion, but as it is ſeldom compatible with zeal, we may perceive and lament the languid ſtate of Chriſtianity in thoſe provinces which had exchanged the Celtic for the Latin tongue; ſince they did not, during the three firſt centuries, give birth to a ſingle eccleſiaſtical writer. From Gaul, which claimed a juſt pre-eminence of learning and authority over all the countries on this ſide of the Alps, the light of the goſpel was more faintly reflected on the remote provinces of Spain and Britain; and if we may credit the vehement aſſertions of Tertullian, they had already received the firſt rays of the faith, when he addreſſed his apology to the magiſtrates of the emperor Severus [174]. But the obſcure and imperfect origin of the weſtern churches of Europe has been ſo negligently recorded, that if we would relate the time and manner of their foundation, we muſt ſupply the ſilence of antiquity by thoſe legends which avarice or ſuperſtition long afterwards dictated to the monks in the lazy gloom of their convents [175]. Of theſe holy romances, that of the apoſtle

CHAP. XV.

CHAP. XV.

St. James can alone, by its ſingular extravagance, deſerve to be mentioned. From a peaceful fiſherman of the lake of Genneſareth, he was transformed into a valorous knight, who charged at the head of the Spaniſh chivalry in their battles againſt the Moors. The graveſt hiſtorians have celebrated his exploits; the miraculous ſhrine of Compoſtella diſplayed his power; and the ſword of a military order, aſſiſted by the terrors of the Inquiſition, was ſufficient to remove every objection of profane criticiſm [176].

Beyond the limits of the Roman empire.

The progreſs of Chriſtianity was not confined to the Roman empire; and according to the primitive fathers, who interpret facts by prophecy, the new religion, within a century after the death of its divine author, had already viſited every part of the globe. „There exiſts not," ſays Juſtin Martyr, „a people, whether Greek or Barbarian, „or any other race of men, by whatſoever ap„pellation or manners they may be diſtinguiſhed, „however ignorant of arts or agriculture, wheth„er they dwell under tents, or wander about „in covered waggons, among whom prayers are „not offered up in the name of a crucified Jeſus „to the Father and Creator of all things [177]." But this ſplendid exaggeration, which even at preſent it would be extremely difficult to reconcile with the real ſtate of mankind, can be conſidered only as the raſh ſally of a devout but careleſs writer, the meaſure of whoſe belief was regulated by that of his wiſhes. But neither the belief, nor the wiſhes of the fathers, can alter the truth of hiſtory.

hiſtory. It will ſtill remain an undoubted fact, that the barbarians of Scythia and Germany, who afterwards ſubverted the Roman monarchy, were involved in the darkneſs of paganiſm; and that even the converſion of Iberia, of Armenia, or of Æthiopia, was not attempted with any degree of ſucceſs till the ſceptre was in the hands of an orthodox emperor [178]. Before that time, the various accidents of war and commerce might indeed diffuſe an imperfect knowledge of the goſpel among the tribes of Caledonia [179], and among the borderers of the Rhine, the Danube, and the Euphrates [180]. Beyond the laſt-mentioned river, Edeſſa was diſtinguiſhed by a firm and early adherence to the faith [181]. From Edeſſa, the principles of Chriſtianity were eaſily introduced into the Greek and Syrian cities which obeyed the ſucceſſors of Artaxerxes; but they do not appear to have made any deep impreſſion on the minds of the Perſians, whoſe religious ſyſtem, by the labours of a well-diſciplined order of prieſts, had been conſtructed with much more art and ſolidity than the uncertain mythology of Greece and Rome [182].

General proportion of Chriſtians and Pagans.

From this impartial though imperfect ſurvey of the progreſs of Chriſtianity, it may perhaps ſeem probable, that the number of its proſelytes has been exceſſively magnified by fear on the one ſide, and by devotion on the other. According to the irreprochable teſtimony of Origen [183], the proportion of the faithful was very inconſiderable when compared with the multitude of an unbe-

CHAP. XV.

lieving world; but, as we are left without any diſtinct information, it is impoſſible to determine, and it is difficult even to conjecture, the real numbers of the primitive Chriſtians. The moſt favourable calculation, however, that can be deduced from the examples of Antioch and of Rome, will not permit us to imagine that more than a twentieth part of the ſubjects of the empire had enliſted themſelves under the banner of the croſs before the important converſion of Conſtantine. But their habits of faith, of zeal, and of union, ſeemed to multiply their numbers; and the ſame cauſes which contributed to their future increaſe, ſerved to render their actual ſtrength more apparent and more formidable.

Whether the firſt Chriſtians were mean and ignorant.

Such is the conſtitution of civil ſociety, that whilſt a few perſons are diſtinguiſhed by riches, by honours, and by knowledge, the body of the people is condemned to obſcurity, ignorance, and poverty. The Chriſtian religion, which addreſſed itſelf to the whole human race, muſt conſequently collect a far greater number of proſelytes from the lower than from the ſuperior ranks of life. This innocent and natural circumſtance has been improved into a very odious imputation, which ſeems to be leſs ſtrenuously denied by the apologiſts, than it is urged by the adverſaries, of the faith; that the new ſect of Chriſtians was almoſt entirely compoſed of the dregs of the populace, of peaſants and mechanics, of boys and women, of beggars and ſlaves, the laſt of whom might ſometimes introduce the miſſionaries into the rich and noble

families to which they belonged. Theſe obſcure teachers (ſuch was the charge of malice and infidelity) are as mute in public as they are loquacious and dogmatical in private. Whilſt they cautiously avoid the dangerous encounter of philoſophers, they mingle with the rude and illiterate crowd, and inſinuate themſelves into thoſe minds, whom their age, their ſex, or their education, has the beſt diſpoſed to receive the impreſſion of ſuperſtitious terrors [184]. CHAP. XV.

Some exceptions with regard to learning.

This unfavourable picture, though not devoid of a faint reſemblance, betrays, by its dark colouring and diſtorted features, the pencil of an enemy. As the humble faith of Chriſt diffuſed itſelf through the world, it was embraced by ſeveral perſons who derived ſome conſequence from the advantages of nature or fortune. Ariſtides, who preſented an eloquent apology to the emperor Hadrian, was an Athenian philoſopher [185]. Juſtin Martyr had ſought divine knowledge in the ſchools of Zeno, of Ariſtotle, of Pythagoras, and of Plato, before he fortunately was accoſted by the old man, or rather the angel, who turned his attention to the ſtudy of the Jewish prophets [186]. Clemens of Alexandria had acquired much various reading in the Greek, and Tertullian in the Latin, language. Julius Africanus and Origen poſſeſſed a very conſiderable ſhare of the learning of their times; and although the ſtyle of Cyprian is very different from that of Lactantius, we might almoſt diſcover that both thoſe writers had been public teachers of rhetoric. Even the ſtudy of philoſophy

CHAP. XV.

was at length introduced among the Chriſtians, but it was not always productive of the moſt ſalutary effects; knowledge was as often the parent of hereſy as of devotion, and the deſcription which was deſigned for the followers of Artemon, may, with equal propriety, be applied to the various ſects that reſiſted the ſucceſſors of the apoſtles. "They preſume to alter the holy ſcriptures, to „ abandon the ancient rule of faith, and to form „ their opinions according to the ſubtile precepts „ of logic. The ſcience of the church is neglected „ for the ſtudy of geometry, and they loſe ſight „ of Heaven while they are employed in meaſuring „ the earth. Euclid is perpetually in their hands. „ Ariſtotle and Theophraſtus are the objects of „ their admiration; and they expreſs an uncom- „ mon reverence for the works of Galen. Their „ errors are derived from the abuſe of the arts „ and ſciences of the infidels, and they corrupt „ the ſimplicity of the goſpel by the refinements „ of human reaſon [187]. "

With regard to rank and fortune.

Nor can it be affirmed with truth, that the advantages of birth and fortune were always ſeparated from the profeſſion of Chriſtianity. Several Roman citizens were brought before the tribunal of Pliny, and he ſoon diſcovered, that a great number of perſons of *every order* of men in Bithynia had deſerted the religion of their anceſtors [188]. His unſuſpected teſtimony may, in this inſtance, obtain more credit than the bold challenge of Tertullian, when he addreſſes himſelf to the fears as well as to the humanity of the proconſul of

Africa, by assuring him, that if he persists in his cruel intentions, he must decimate Carthage, and that he will find among the guilty many persons of his own rank, senators and matrons of noblest extraction, and the friends or relations of his most intimate friends [189]. It appears, however, that about forty years afterwards the emperor Valerian was persuaded of the truth of this assertion, since in one of his rescripts he evidently supposes, that senators, Roman knights, and ladies of quality, were engaged in the Christian sect [190]. The church still continued to increase its outward splendour as it lost its internal purity; and, in the reign of Diocletian, the palace, the courts of justice, and even the army, concealed a multitude of Christians, who endeavoured to reconcile the interests of the present, with those of a future, life.

Christianity most favourably received by the poor and simple.

And yet these exceptions are either too few in number, or too recent in time, entirely to remove the imputation of ignorance and obscurity which has been so arrogantly cast on the first prolelytes of Christianity. Instead of employing in our defence the fictions of later ages, it will be more prudent to convert the occasion of scandal into a subject of edification. Our serious thoughts will suggest to us, that the apostles themselves were chosen by providence among the fishermen of Galilee, and that the lower we depress the temporal condition of the first Christians, the more reason we shall find to admire their merit and success. It is incumbent on us diligently to remember, that the kingdom of Heaven was promised to the poor

CHAP. XV.

in ſpirit, and that minds afflicted by calamity and the contempt of mankind, cheerfully liſten to the divine promiſe of future happineſs; while, on the contrary, the fortunate are ſatisfied with the poſſeſſion of this world; and the wiſe abuſe in doubt and diſpute their vain ſuperiority of reaſon and knowledge.

Rejected by ſome eminent men of the firſt and ſecond centuries.

We ſtand in need of ſuch reflections to comfort us for the loſs of ſome illuſtrious characters, which in our eyes might have ſeemed the moſt worthy of the heavenly preſent. The names of Seneca, of the elder and the younger Pliny, of Tacitus, of Plutarch, of Galen, of the ſlave Epictetus, and of the emperor Marcus Antoninus, adorn the age in which they flouriſhed, and exalt the dignity of human nature. They filled with glory their reſpective ſtations, either in active or contemplative life; their excellent underſtandings were improved by ſtudy; Philoſophy had purified their minds from the prejudices of the popular ſuperſtition; and their days were ſpent in the purſuit of truth and the practice of virtue. Yet all theſe ſages (it is no leſs an object of ſurpriſe than of concern) overlooked or rejected the perfection of the Chriſtian ſyſtem. Their language or their ſilence equally diſcover their contempt for the growing ſect, which in their time had diffuſed itſelf over the Roman empire. Thoſe among them who condeſcend to mention the Chriſtians, conſider them only as obſtinate and perverſe enthuſiaſts, who exacted an implicit ſubmiſſion to their myſterious doctrines, without being able to produce a ſingle argument

that could engage the attention of men of ſenſe and learning [191]. CHAP. XV.

It is at leaſt doubtful whether any of theſe philoſophers peruſed the apologies which the primitive Chriſtians repeatedly published in behalf of themſelves and of their religion; but it is much to be lamented that ſuch a cauſe was not defended by abler advocates. They expoſe with ſuperfluous wit and eloquence, the extravagance of Polytheiſm. They intereſt our compaſſion by diſplaying the innocence and ſufferings of their injured brethren. But when they would demonſtrate the divine origin of Chriſtianity, they inſiſt much more ſtrongly on the predictions which announced, than on the miracles which accompanied, the appearance of the Meſſiah. Their favourite argument might ſerve to edify a Chriſtian or to convert a Jew, ſince both the one and the other acknowledge the authority of thoſe prophecies, and both are obliged, with devout reverence, to ſearch for their ſenſe and their accomplishment. But this mode of perſuaſion loſes much of its weight and influence, when it is addreſſed to thoſe who neither underſtand nor reſpect the Moſaic diſpenſation and the prophetic ſtyle [192]. In the unskilful hands of Juſtin and of the ſucceeding apologiſts, the ſublime meaning of the Hebrew oracles evaporates in diſtant types, affected conceits, and cold allegories; and even their authenticity was rendered ſuſpicious to an unlightened Gentile, by the mixture of pious forgeries, which, under the names of Orpheus, Hermes, and the Sibyls [193], were ob- Their neglect of prophecy

CHAP. XV.

truded on him as of equal value with the genuine inſpirations of Heaven. The adoption of fraud and ſophiſtry in the defence of revelation, too often reminds us of the injudicious conduct of thoſe poets who load their *invulnerable* heroes with a uſeleſs weight of cumberſome and brittle armour.

and of miracles.

But how ſhall we excuſe the ſupine inattention of the Pagan and philoſophic world, to thoſe evidences which were preſented by the hand of Omnipotence, not to their reaſon, but to their ſenſes? During the age of Chriſt, of his apoſtles, and of their firſt diſciples, the doctrine which they preached was confirmed by innumerable prodigies. The lame walked, the blind ſaw, the ſick were healed, the dead were raiſed, dæmons were expelled, and the laws of Nature were frequently ſuſpended for the benefit of the church. But the ſages of Greece and Rome turned aſide from the awful ſpectacle, and purſuing the ordinary occupations of life and ſtudy, appeared unconſcious of any alterations in the moral or phyſical government of the world. Under the reign of Tiberius, the whole earth [194], or at leaſt a celebrated province of the Roman empire [195], was involved in a præternatural darkneſs of three hours. Even this miraculous event, which ought to have excited the wonder, the curioſity, and the devotion of mankind, paſſed without notice in an age of ſcience and hiſtory [196]. It happened during the lifetime of Seneca and the elder Pliny, who muſt have experienced the immediate effects, or re-

General ſilence concerning the darkneſs of the Paſſion.

ceived the earlieſt intelligence, of the prodigy. Each of theſe philoſophers, in a laborious work, has recorded all the great phenomena of Nature, earthquakes, meteors, comets, and eclipſes, which his indefatigable curioſity could collect [197]. Both the one and the other have omitted to mention the greateſt phenomenon to which the mortal eye has been witneſs ſince the creation of the globe. A diſtinct chapter of Pliny [198] is deſigned for eclipſes of an extraordinary nature and unuſual duration; but he contents himſelf with deſcribing the ſingular defect of light which followed the murder of Cæſar, when, during the greateſt part of a year, the orb of the ſun appeared pale and without ſplendour. This ſeaſon of obſcurity, which cannot ſurely be compared with the præternatural darkneſs of the paſſion, had been already celebrated by moſt of the poets [199] and hiſtorians of that memorable age [200],

CHAP. XV.

CHAP. XVI.

The Conduct of the Roman Government towards the Chriſtians, from the Reign of Nero to that of Conſtantine.

CHAP. XVI. Chriſtianity perſecuted by the Roman emperors.

IF we ſeriously conſider the purity of the Chriſtian religion, the ſanctity of its moral precepts, and the innocent as well as auſtere lives of the greater number of thoſe, who during the firſt ages embraced the faith of the goſpel, we ſhould naturally ſuppoſe, that ſo benevolent a doctrine would have been received with due reverence, even by the unbelieving world; that the learned and the polite, however they might deride the miracles, would have eſteemed the virtues of the new ſect; and that the magiſtrates, inſtead of perſecuting, would have protected an order of men who yielded the moſt paſſive obedience to the laws, though they declined the active cares of war and government. If on the other hand we recollect the univerſal toleration of Polytheiſm, as it was invariably maintained by the faith of the people, the incredulity of philoſophers, and the policy of the Roman ſenate and emperors, we are at a loſs to diſcover what new offence the Chriſtians had committed, what new provocation could exaſperate the mild indifference of antiquity, and what new motives could urge the Roman princes, who beheld without concern a thouſand forms of religion ſubſiſting in peace under their

gentle ſway, to inflict a ſevere punishment on any part of their ſubjects, who had choſen for themſelves a ſingular but an inoffenſive mode of faith and worship. CHAP. XVI.

The religious policy of the ancient world ſeems to have aſſumed a more ſtern and intolerant character, to oppoſe the progreſs of Chriſtianity. About fourſcore years after the death of Chriſt, his innocent diſciples were punished with death by the ſentence of a proconſul of the moſt amiable and philoſophic character, and according to the laws of an emperor, diſtinguished by the wiſdom and juſtice of his general adminiſtration. The apologies which were repeatedly addreſſed to the ſucceſſors of Trajan are filled with the moſt pathetic complaints, that the Chriſtians who obeyed the dictates, and ſolicited the liberty, of conſcience, were alone, among all the ſubjects of the Roman empire, excluded from the common benefits of their auſpicious government. The deaths of a few eminent martyrs have been recorded with care; and from the time that Chriſtianity was inveſted with the ſupreme power, the governors of the church have been no leſs diligently employed in diſplaying the cruelty, than in imitating the conduct, of their Pagan adverſaries. To ſeparate (if it be poſſible) a few authentic as well as intereſting facts from an undigeſted maſs of fiction and error, and to relate, in a clear and rational manner, the cauſes, the extent, the duration, and the moſt important circumſtances of the perſecutions to which the firſt Chriſtians were expoſed, is the deſign of the preſent Chapter.

CHAP. XVI. Inquiry into their motives.

The ſectaries of a perſecuted religion, depreſſed by fear, animated with reſentment, and perhaps heated by enthuſiaſm, are ſeldom in a proper temper of mind calmly to inveſtigate, or candidly to appreciate, the motives of their enemies, which often eſcape the impartial and diſcerning view even of thoſe who are placed at a ſecure diſtance from the flames of perſecution. A reaſon has been aſſigned for the conduct of the emperors towards the primitive Chriſtians, which may appear the more ſpecious and probable as it is drawn from the acknowledged genius of Polytheiſm. It has already been obſerved, that the religious concord of the world was principally ſupported by the implicit aſſent and reverence which the nations of antiquity expreſſed for their reſpective traditions and ceremonies. It might therefore be expected, that they would unite with indignation againſt any ſect or people which ſhould ſeparate itſelf from the communion of mankind, and claiming the excluſive poſſeſſion of divine knowledge, ſhould diſdain every form of worſhip, except its own, as impious and idolatrous. The rights of toleration were held by mutual indulgence: they were juſtly forfeited by a refuſal of the accuſtomed tribute. As the payment of this tribute was inflexibly refuſed by the Jews, and by them alone, the conſideration of the treatment which they experienced from the Roman magiſtrates, will ſerve to explain how far theſe ſpeculations are juſtified by facts, and will lead us to diſcover the true cauſes of the perſecution of Chriſtianity.

CHAP. XVI. Rebellious ſpirit of the Jews.

Without repeating what has been already mentioned, of the reverence of the Roman princes and governors for the temple of Jeruſalem, we ſhall only obſerve, that the deſtruction of the temple and city was accompanied and followed by every circumſtance that could exaſperate the minds of the conquerors, and authorize religious perſecution by the moſt ſpecious arguments of political juſtice and the public ſafety. From the reign of Nero to that of Antoninus Pius, the Jews diſcovered a fierce impatience of the dominion of Rome, which repeatedly broke out in the moſt furious maſſacres and inſurrections. Humanity is ſhocked at the recital of the horrid cruelties which they committed in the cities of Egypt, of Cyprus, and of Cyrene, where they dwelt in treacherous friendship with the unſuſpecting natives[1]; and we are tempted to applaud the ſevere retaliation which was exerciſed by the arms of the legions againſt a race of fanatics, whoſe dire and credulous ſuperſtition ſeemed to render them the implacable enemies not only of the Roman government, but of humankind[2]. The enthuſiaſm of the Jews was ſupported by the opinion, that it was unlawful for them to pay taxes to an idolatrous maſter; and by the flattering promiſe which they derived from their ancient oracles, that a conquering Meſſiah would ſoon ariſe, deſtined to break their fetters, and to inveſt the favourites of heaven with the empire of the earth. It was by announcing himſelf as their long-expected deliverer, and by calling on

CHAP. XVI.

all the deſcendants of Abraham to aſſert the hope of Iſrael, that the famous Barchochebas collected a formidable army, with which he reſiſted during two years the power of the emperor Hadrian [s].

Toleration of the Jewiſh religion.

Notwithſtanding theſe repeated provocations, the reſentment of the Roman princes expired after the victory; nor were their apprehenſions continued beyond the period of war and danger. By the general indulgence of polytheiſm, and by the mild temper of Antoninus Pius, the Jews were reſtored to their ancient privileges, and once more obtained the permiſſion of circumciſing their children, with the eaſy reſtraint, that they ſhould never confer on any foreign proſelyte that diſtinguiſhing mark of the Hebrew race [t]. The numerous remains of that people, though they were ſtill excluded from the precincts of Jeruſalem, were permitted to form and to maintain conſiderable eſtabliſhments both in Italy and in the provinces, to acquire the freedom of Rome, to enjoy municipal honours, and to obtain at the ſame time an exemption from the burdenſome and expenſive offices of ſociety. The moderation or the contempt of the Romans gave a legal ſanction to the form of eccleſiaſtical police which was inſtituted by the vanquiſhed ſect. The patriarch, who had fixed his reſidence at Tiberias, was empowered to appoint his ſubordinate miniſters and apoſtles, to exerciſe a domeſtic juriſdiction, and to receive from his diſperſed brethren an annual contribution [u]. New ſynagogues were frequently erected

in the principal cities of the empire; and the ſabbaths, the faſts, and the feſtivals, which were either commanded by the Moſaic law, or enjoined by the traditions of the Rabbis, were celebrated in the moſt ſolemn and public manner [r]. Such gentle treatment inſenſibly aſſuaged the ſtern temper of the Jews. Awakened from their dream of prophecy and conqueſt, they aſſumed the behaviour of peaceable and induſtrious ſubjects. Their irreconcileable hatred of mankind, inſtead of flaming out in acts of blood and violence, evaporated in leſs dangerous gratifications. They embraced every opportunity of over-reaching the idolaters in trade; and they pronounced ſecret and ambiguous imprecations againſt the haughty kingdom of Edom [s].

The Jews were a people which followed, the Chriſtians a ſect which deſerted, the religion of their fathers.

Since the Jews, who rejected with abhorrence the deities adored by their ſovereign and by their fellow-ſubjects, enjoyed however the free exerciſe of their unſocial religion; there muſt have exiſted ſome other cauſe, which expoſed the diſciples of Chriſt to thoſe ſeverities from which the poſterity of Abraham was exempt. The difference between them is ſimple and obvious; but, according to the ſentiments of antiquity, it was of the higheſt importance. The Jews were a *nation*; the Chriſtians were a *ſect*: and if it was natural for every community to reſpect the ſacred inſtitutions of their neighbours, it was incumbent on them to perſevere in thoſe of their anceſtors. The voice of oracles, the precepts of philoſophers, and the authority of the laws, unanimously enforced this

CHAP. XVI.

national obligation. By their lofty claim of ſuperior ſanctity, the Jews might provoke the Polytheiſts to conſider them as an odious and impure race. By diſdaining the intercourſe of other nations they might deſerve their contempt. The laws of Moſes might be for the moſt part frivolous or abſurd; yet ſince they had been received during many ages by a large ſociety, his followers were juſtified by the example of mankind; and it was univerſally acknowledged, that they had a right to practiſe what it would have been criminal in them to neglect. But this principle which protected the Jewiſh ſynagogue, afforded not any favour or ſecurity to the primitive church. By embracing the faith of the Goſpel, the Chriſtians incurred the ſuppoſed guilt of an unnatural and unpardonable offence. They diſſolved the ſacred ties of cuſtom and education, violated the religious inſtitutions of their country, and preſumptuously deſpiſed whatever their fathers had believed as true, or had reverenced as ſacred. Nor was this apoſtacy (if we may uſe the expreſſion) merely of a partial or local kind; ſince the pious deſerter who withdrew himſelf from the temples of Egypt or Syria, would equally diſdain to ſeek an aſylum in thoſe of Athens or Carthage. Every Chriſtian rejected with contempt the ſuperſtitions of his family, his city, and his province. The whole body of Chriſtians unanimously refuſed to hold any communion with the gods of Rome, of the empire, and of mankind. It was in vain that the oppreſſed believer aſſerted the inalienable rights of conſcience and

and private judgment. Though his ſituation might excite the pity, his arguments could never reach the underſtanding, either of the philoſophic or of the believing part of the Pagan world. To their apprehenſions, it was no leſs a matter of ſurpriſe, that any individuals ſhould entertain ſcruples againſt complying with the eſtabliſhed mode of worſhip, than if they had conceived a ſudden abhorrence to the manners, the dreſs, or the language of their native country [*].

Chriſtianity accuſed of atheiſm, and miſtaken by the people and philoſophers.

The ſurpriſe of the Pagans was ſoon ſucceeded by reſentment; and the moſt pious of men were expoſed to the unjuſt but dangerous imputation of impiety. Malice and prejudice concurred in repreſenting the Chriſtians as a ſociety of atheiſts, who, by the moſt daring attack on the religious conſtitution of the empire, had merited the ſevereſt animadverſion of the civil magiſtrate. They had ſeparated themſelves (they gloried in the confeſſion) from every mode of ſuperſtition which was received in any part of the globe by the various temper of polytheiſm: but it was not altogether ſo evident what deity, or what form of worſhip, they had ſubſtituted to the gods and temples of antiquity. The pure and ſublime idea which they entertained of the Supreme Being eſcaped the groſs conception of the Pagan multitude, who were at a loſs to diſcover a ſpiritual and ſolitary God, that was neither repreſented under any corporeal figure or viſible ſymbol, nor was adored with the accuſtomed pomp of libations and feſtivals, of altars and ſacrifices [*]. The ſages of Greece and Rome,

CHAP. XVI.

who had elevated their minds to the comtemplation of the exiſtence and attributes of the First Cauſe, were induced by reaſon or by vanity to reſerve for themſelves and their choſen diſciples the privilege of this philoſophical devotion [10]. They were far from admitting the prejudices of mankind as the ſtandard of truth, but they conſidered them as flowing from the original diſpoſition of human nature; and they ſuppoſed that any popular mode of faith and worship which preſumed to diſclaim the aſſiſtance of the ſenſes, would, in proportion as it receded from ſuperſtition, find itſelf incapable of reſtraining the wanderings of the fancy and the viſions of fanaticiſm. The careleſs glance which men of wit and learning condeſcended to caſt on the Chriſtian revelation, ſerved only to confirm their haſty opinion, and to perſuade them, that the principle, which they might have revered, of the divine unity, was defaced by the wild enthuſiaſm, and annihilated by the airy ſpeculations, of the new ſectaries. The author of a celebrated dialogue, which has been attributed to Lucian, whilſt he affects to treat the myſterious ſubject of the Trinity in a ſtyle of ridicule and contempt, betrays his own ignorance of the weakneſs of human reaſon, and of the inſcrutable nature of the Divine perfections [11].

It might appear leſs ſurpriſing, that the founder of Chriſtianity ſhould not only be revered by his diſciples as a ſage and a prophet, but that he ſhould be adored as a God. The Polytheiſts were diſpoſed to adopt every article of faith, which

ſeemed to offer any reſemblance, however diſtant or imperfect, with the popular mythology; and the legends of Bacchus, of Hercules, and of Æſculapius, had, in ſome meaſure, prepared their imagination for the appearance of the Son of God under a human form [12]. But they were aſtoniſhed that the Chriſtians ſhould abandon the temples of thoſe ancient heroes, who, in the infancy of the world, had invented arts, inſtituted laws, and vanquiſhed the tyrants or monſters who infeſted the earth; in order to chooſe for the excluſive object of their religious worſhip, an obſcure teacher, who, in a recent age, and among a barbarous people, had fallen a ſacrifice either to the malice of his own countrymen, or to the jealouſy of the Roman government. The Pagan multitude, reſerving their gratitude for temporal benefits alone, rejected the ineſtimable preſent of life and immortality, which was offered to mankind by Jeſus of Nazareth. His mild conſtancy in the midſt of cruel and voluntary ſufferings, his univerſal benevolence, and the ſublime ſimplicity of his actions and character, were inſufficient, in the opinion of thoſe carnal men, to compenſate for the want of fame, of empire, and of ſucceſs; and whilſt they refuſed to acknowledge his ſtupendous triumph over the powers of darkneſs and of the grave, they miſrepreſented, or they inſulted, the equivocal birth, wandering life, and ignominious death, of the divine Author of Chriſtianity [13].

The perſonal guilt which every Chriſtian had contracted, in thus preferring his private ſentiment

The union and aſſemblies of the

CHAP. XVI. Chriſtians conſidered as a dangerous conſpiracy.

to the national religion, was aggravated in a very high degree by the number and union of the criminals. It is well known, and has been already obſerved, the Roman policy viewed with the utmoſt jealouſy and diſtruſt any aſſociation among its ſubjects; and that the privileges of private corporations, though formed for the moſt harmleſs or beneficial purpoſes, were beſtowed with a very ſparing hand [14]. The religious aſſemblies of the Chriſtians, who had ſeparated themſelves from the public worship, appeared of a much leſs innocent nature: they were illegal in their principle, and in their conſequences might become dangerous; nor were the emperors conſcious that they violated the laws of juſtice, when, for the peace of ſociety, they prohibited thoſe ſecret and ſometimes nocturnal meetings [15]. The pious diſobedience of the Chriſtians made their conduct, or perhaps their deſigns, appear in a much more ſerious and criminal light; and the Roman princes, who might perhaps have ſuffered themſelves to be diſarmed by a ready ſubmiſſion, deeming their honour concerned in the execution of their commands, ſometimes attempted, by rigorous punishments, to ſubdue this independent ſpirit, which boldly acknowledged an authority ſuperior to that of the magiſtrate. The extent and duration of this ſpiritual conſpiracy ſeemed to render it every day more deſerving of his animadverſion. We have already ſeen that the active and ſucceſsful zeal of the Chriſtians had inſenſibly diffuſed them through every province and almoſt every city of the em-

pire. The new converts ſeemed to renounce their family and country, that they might connect themſelves in an indiſſoluble band of union with a peculiar ſociety, which every where aſſumed a different character from the reſt of mankind. Their gloomy and auſtere aſpect, their abhorrence of the common buſineſs and pleaſures of life, and their frequent predictions of impending calamities [16], inſpired the Pagans with the apprehenſion of ſome danger, which would ariſe from the new ſect, the more alarming as it was the more obſcure. „Whatever," ſays Pliny, „may be the prin„ciple of their conduct, their inflexible obſtinacy „appeared deſerving of punishment [17]."

Their manners calumniated.

The precautions with which the diſciples of Chriſt performed the offices of religion were at firſt dictated by fear and neceſſity; but they were continued from choice. By imitating the awful ſecrecy which reigned in the Eleuſinian myſteries, the Chriſtians had flattered themſelves that they ſhould render their ſacred inſtitutions more reſpectable in the eyes of the Pagan world [18]. But the event, as it often happens to the operations of ſubtile policy, deceived their wiſhes and their expectations. It was concluded, that they only concealed, what they would have blushed to diſcloſe. Their miſtaken prudence afforded an opportunity for malice to invent, and for ſuſpicious credulity to believe, the horrid tales which deſcribed the Chriſtians as the moſt wicked of human kind, who practiſed in their dark receſſes every abomination that a depraved fancy could ſuggeſt,

CHAP. XVI.

and who ſolicited the favour of their unknown God by the ſacrifice of every moral virtue. There were many who pretended to confeſs or to relate the ceremonies of this abhorred ſociety. It was aſſerted, „that a newborn infant, entirely covered „over with flour, was preſented, like ſome myſtic „ſymbol of initiation, to the knife of the proſe„lyte, who unknowingly inflicted many a ſecret „and mortal wound on the innocent victim of his „error; that as ſoon as the cruel deed was per„petrated, the ſectaries drank up the blood, „greedily tore aſunder the quivering members, „and pledged themſelves to eternal ſecrecy, by „a mutual conſciouſneſs of guilt. It was as confi„dently affirmed, that this inhuman ſacrifice was „ſucceeded by a ſuitable entertainment, in which „intemperance ſerved as a provocative to brutal „luſt; till, at the appointed moment, the lights „were ſuddenly extinguiſhed, ſhame was baniſh„ed, nature was forgotten; and, as accident „might direct, the darkneſs of the night was „polluted by the inceſtuous commerce of ſiſters „and brothers, of ſons and of mothers [11]."

Their imprudent defence.

But the peruſal of the ancient apologies was ſufficient to remove even the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion from the mind of a candid adverſary. The Chriſtians, with the intrepid ſecurity of innocence, appeal from the voice of rumour to the equity of the magiſtrates. They acknowledge, that if any proof can be produced of the crimes which calumny has imputed to them, they are worthy of the moſt ſevere punishment. They provoke the puniſh-

ment, and they challenge the proof. At the same time they urge, with equal truth and propriety, that the charge is not less devoid of probability, than it is destitute of evidence; they ask, whether any one can seriously believe that the pure and holy precepts of the Gospel, which so frequently restrain the use of the most lawful enjoyments, should inculcate the practice of the most abominable crimes; that a large society should resolve to dishonour itself in the eyes of its own members; and that great number of persons of either sex, and every age and character, insensible to the fear of death or infamy, should consent to violate those principles which nature and education had imprinted most deeply in their minds [10]. Nothing, it should seem, could weaken the force or destroy the effect of so unanswerable a justification, unless it were the injudicious conduct of the apologists themselves, who betrayed the common cause of religion, to gratify their devout hatred to the domestic enemies of the church. It was sometimes faintly insinuated, and sometimes boldly asserted, that the same bloody sacrifices, and the same incestuous festivals, which were so falsely ascribed to the orthodox believers, were in reality celebrated by the Marcionites, by the Carpocratians, and by several other sects of the Gnostics, who, notwithstanding they might deviate into the paths of heresy, were still actuated by the sentiments of men, and still governed by the precepts of Christianity [11]. Accusations of a similar kind were retorted upon the church by the schismatics who

CHAP. XVI.

CHAP. XVI.

had departed from its communion [22], and it was confeſſed on all ſides, that the moſt ſcandalous licentiouſneſs of manners prevailed among great numbers of thoſe who affected the name of Chriſtians. A Pagan magiſtrate, who poſſeſſed neither leiſure nor abilities to diſcern the almoſt imperceptible line which divides the orthodox faith from heretical pravity, might eaſily have imagined that their mutual animoſity had extorted the diſcovery of their common guilt. It was fortunate for the repoſe, or at leaſt for the reputation, of the firſt Chriſtians, that the magiſtrates ſometimes proceeded with more temper and moderation than is uſually conſiſtent with religious zeal, and that they reported, as the impartial reſult of their judicial inquiry, that the ſectaries, who had deſerted the eſtabliſhed worſhip, appeared to them ſincere in their profeſſions, and blameleſs in their manners; however they might incur, by their abſurd and exceſſive ſuperſtition, the cenſure of the laws [23].

Idea of the conduct of the emperors towards the Chriſtians.

Hiſtory, which undertakes to record the tranſactions of the paſt, for the inſtruction of future ages, would ill deſerve that honourable office, if ſhe condeſcended to plead the cauſe of tyrants, or to juſtify the maxims of perſecution. It muſt, however, be acknowledged, that the conduct of the emperors who appeared the leaſt favourable to the primitive church, is by no means ſo criminal as that of modern ſovereigns, who have employed the arm of violence and terror againſt the religious opinions of any part of their ſubjects.

From their reflections, or even from their own feelings, a Charles V. or a Louis XIV. might have acquired a juſt knowledge of the rights of conſcience, of the obligation of faith, and of the innocence of error. But the princes and magiſtrates of ancient Rome were ſtrangers to thoſe principles which inſpired and authoriſed the inflexible obſtinacy of the Chriſtians in the cauſe of truth, nor could they themſelves diſcover in their own breaſts, any motive which would have prompted them to refuſe a legal, and as it were a natural, ſubmiſſion to the ſacred inſtitutions of their country. The ſame reaſon which contributes to alleviate the guilt, muſt have tended to abate the rigour, of their perſecutions. As they were actuated, not by the furious zeal of bigots, but by the temperate policy of legislators, contempt muſt often have relaxed, and humanity muſt frequently have ſuſpended the execution of thoſe laws, which they enacted againſt the humble and obſcure followers of Chriſt. From the general view of their character and motives we might naturally conclude: I. That a conſiderable time elapſed before they conſidered the new ſectaries as an object deſerving of the attention of government. II. That in the conviction of any of their ſubjects who were accuſed of ſo very ſingular a crime, they proceeded with caution and reluctance. III. That they were moderate in the uſe of punishments; and IV. That the afflicted church enjoyed many intervals of peace and tranquillity. Notwithſtanding the careleſs indifference which the moſt copious and

CHAP. XVI.

the moſt minute of the Pagan writers have ſhewn to the affairs of the Chriſtians [24] it may ſtill be in our power to confirm each of theſe probable ſuppoſitions, by the evidence of authentic facts.

They neglected the Chriſtians as a ſect of Jews.

I. By the diſpenſation of Providence, a myſterious veil was caſt over the infancy of the church, which, till the faith of the Chriſtians was matured, and their numbers were multiplied, ſerved to protect them not only from the malice but even from the knowledge of the pagan world. The ſlow and gradual abolition of the Moſaic ceremonies afforded a ſafe and innocent diſguiſe to the more early proſelytes of the Goſpel. As they were far the greater part of the race of Abraham, they were diſtinguiſhed by the peculiar mark of circumciſion, offered up their devotions in the Temple of Jeruſalem till its final deſtruction, and received both the Law and the Prophets as the genuine inſpirations of the Deity. The Gentile converts, who by a ſpiritual adoption had been aſſociated to the hope of Iſrael, were likewiſe confounded under the garb and appearance of Jews [25], and as the Polytheiſts paid leſs regard to articles of faith than to the external worship, the new ſect, which carefully concealed, or faintly announced, its future greatneſs and ambition, was permitted to ſhelter itſelf under the general toleration which was granted to an ancient and celebrated people in the Roman empire. It was not long, perhaps, before the Jews themſelves, animated with a fiercer zeal and a more jealous faith, perceived the gradual ſeparation of their

Nazarene brethren from the doctrine of the ſynagogue; and they would gladly have extinguiſhed the dangerous hereſy in the blood of its adherents. But the decrees of heaven had already diſarmed their malice; and though they might ſometimes exert the licentious privilege of ſedition, they no longer poſſeſſed the adminiſtration of criminal juſtice; nor did they find it eaſy to infuſe into the calm breaſt of a Roman magiſtrate the rancour of their own zeal and prejudice. The provincial governors declared themſelves ready to liſten to any accuſation that might affect the public ſafety: but as ſoon as they were informed, that it was a queſtion not of facts but of words, a diſpute relating only to the interpretation of the Jewish laws and prophecies, they deemed it unworthy of the majeſty of Rome ſeriously to diſcuſs the obſcure differences which might ariſe among a barbarous and ſuperſtitious people. The innocence of the firſt Chriſtians was protected by ignorance and contempt; and the tribunal of the pagan magiſtrate often proved their moſt aſſured refuge againſt the fury of the ſynagogue [26]. If indeed we were diſpoſed to adopt the traditions of a too credulous antiquity, we might relate the diſtant peregrinations, the wonderful atchievements, and the various deaths of the twelve apoſtles: but a more accurate inquiry will induce us to doubt, whether any of thoſe perſons who had been witneſſes to the miracles of Chriſt were permitted beyond the limits of Paleſtine, to ſeal with their blood the truth of their teſtimony [27]. From the

CHAP. XVI.

CHAP. XVI.

ordinary term of human life, it may very naturally be presumed that most of them were deceased before the discontent of the Jews broke out into that furious war, which was terminated only by the ruin of Jerusalem. During a long period, from the death of Christ to that memorable rebellion, we cannot discover any traces of Roman intolerance, unless they are to be found in the sudden, the transient, but the cruel persecution, which was exercised by Nero against the Christians of the capital, thirty-five years after the former, and only two years before the latter of those great events. The character of the philosophic historian, to whom we are principally indebted for the knowledge of this singular transaction, would alone be sufficient to recommend it to our most attentive consideration.

The fire of Rome under the reign of Nero.

In the tenth year of the reign of Nero, the capital of the empire was afflicted by a fire which raged beyond the memory or example of former ages [28]. The monuments of Grecian art and of Roman virtue, the trophies of the Punic and Gallic wars, the most holy temples, and the most splendid palaces, were involved in one common destruction. Of the fourteen regions or quarters into which Rome was divided, four only subsisted entire, three were levelled with the ground, and the remaining seven, which had experienced the fury of the flames, displayed a melancholy prospect of ruin and desolation. The vigilance of government appears not to have neglected any of the precautions which might alleviate the sense of so

dreadful a calamity. The Imperial gardens were thrown open to the diſtreſſed multitude, temporary buildings were erected for their accommodation, and a plentiful ſupply of corn and proviſions was diſtributed at a very moderate price [29]. The moſt generous policy ſeemed to have dictated the edicts which regulated the diſpoſition of the ſtreets and the conſtruction of private houſes; and as it uſually happens, in an age of proſperity, the conflagration of Rome, in the courſe of a few years, produced a new city, more regular and more beautiful than the former. But all the prudence and humanity affected by Nero on this occaſion were inſufficient to preſerve him from the popular ſuſpicion. Every crime might be imputed to the aſſaſſin of his wife and mother; nor could the prince, who proſtituted his perſon and dignity on the theatre, be deemed incapable of the moſt extravagant folly. The voice of rumour accuſed the emperor as the incendiary of his own capital; and as the moſt incredible ſtories are the beſt adapted to the genius of an enraged people, it was gravely reported, and firmly believed, that Nero, enjoying the calamity which he had occaſioned, amuſed himſelf with ſinging to his lyre the deſtruction of ancient Troy [30]. To divert a ſuſpicion, which the power of deſpotiſm was unable to ſuppreſs, the emperor reſolved to ſubſtitute in his own place ſome fictitious criminals. „ With this „ view (continues Tacitus) he inflicted the moſt „ exquiſite tortures on thoſe men, who, under „ the vulgar appellation of Chriſtians, were

Cruel puniſhment of the Chriſtians, as the incendiaries of the city.

CHAP. XVI.

„ already branded with deſerved infamy. They de-
„ rived their name and origin from Chriſt, who in
„ the reign of Tiberius had ſuffered death, by the
„ ſentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate [31]. For a
„ while, this dire ſuperſtition was checked; but it
„ again burſt forth; and not only ſpread itſelf over
„ Judæa, the firſt ſeat of this miſchievous ſect, but
„ was even introduced into Rome, the common
„ aſylum which receives and protects, whatever is
„ atrocious. The confeſſions of thoſe who were
„ ſeized, diſcovered a great multitude of their
„ accomplices, and they were all convicted, not
„ ſo much for the crime of ſetting fire to the city,
„ as for their hatred of human kind [32]. They
„ died in torments, and their torments were em-
„ bittered by inſult and deriſion. Some were
„ nailed on croſſes; others ſewn up in the skins
„ of wild beaſts, and expoſed to the fury of dogs:
„ others again, ſmeared over with combuſtible
„ materials, were uſed as torches to illuminate
„ the darkneſs of the night. The gardens of Nero
„ were deſtined for the melancholy ſpectacle,
„ which was accompanied with a horſe race, and
„ honoured with the preſence of the emperor,
„ who mingled with the populace in the dreſs
„ and attitude of a charioteer. The guilt of the
„ Chriſtians deſerved indeed the moſt exemplary
„ punishment, but the public abhorrence was
„ changed into commiſeration, from the opinion
„ that thoſe unhappy wretches were ſacrificed,
„ not ſo much to the public welfare, as to the

„ cruelty of a jealous tyrant ". " Thoſe who ſurvey with a curious eye the revolutions of mankind, may obſerve, that the gardens and circus of Nero on the Vatican, which were polluted with the blood of the firſt Chriſtians, have been rendered ſtill more famous, by the triumph and by the abuſe of the perſecuted religion. On the ſame ſpot [34], a temple, which far ſurpaſſes the ancient glories of the Capitol, has been ſince erected by the Chriſtian Pontiffs, who, deriving their claim of univerſal dominion from an humble fiſherman of Galilee, have ſucceeded to the throne of the Cæſars, given laws to the barbarian conquerors of Rome, and extended their ſpiritual juriſdiction from the coaſt of the Baltic to the ſhores of the Pacific Ocean.

CHAP. XVI.

But it would be improper to diſmiſs this account of Nero's perſecution, till we have made ſome obſervations, that may ſerve to remove the difficulties with which it is perplexed, and to throw ſome light on the ſubſequent hiſtory of the church.

1. The moſt ſceptical criticiſm is obliged to reſpect the truth of this extraordinary fact, and the integrity of this celebrated paſſage of Tacitus. The former is confirmed by the diligent and accurate Suetonius, who mentions the puniſhment which Nero inflicted on the Chriſtians, a ſect of men who had embraced a new and criminal ſuperſtition [35]. The latter may be proved by the conſent of the moſt ancient manuſcripts; by the inimitable character of the ſtyle of Tacitus; by his reputation,

Remarks on the paſſage of Tacitus relative to the perſecution of the Chriſtians by Nero.

CHAP. XVI.

which guarded his text from the interpolations of pious fraud; and by the purport of his narration, which accuſed the firſt Chriſtians of the moſt atrocious crimes, without inſinuating that they poſſeſſed any miraculous or even magical powers above the reſt of mankind [16]. 2. Notwithſtanding it is probable that Tacitus was born ſome years before the fire of Rome [17], he could derive only from reading and converſation the knowledge of an event which happened during his infancy. Before he gave himſelf to the Public, he calmly waited till his genius had attained its full maturity, and he was more than forty years of age, when a grateful regard for the memory of the virtuous Agricola, extorted from him the moſt early of thoſe hiſtorical compoſitions which will delight and inſtruct the moſt diſtant poſterity. After making a trial of his ſtrength in the life of Agricola and the deſcription of Germany, he conceived, and at length executed, a more arduous work; the hiſtory of Rome, in thirty books, from the fall of Nero to the acceſſion of Nerva. The adminiſtration of Nerva introduced an age of juſtice and proſperity, which Tacitus had deſtined for the occupation of his old age [18]; but when he took a nearer view of his ſubject, judging, perhaps, that it was a more honourable, or a leſs invidious office, to record the vices of paſt tyrants, than to celebrate the virtues of a reigning monarch, he choſe rather to relate, under the form of annals, the actions of the four immediate ſucceſſors of Auguſtus. To collect, to diſpoſe, and to adorn

a

a ſeries of fourſcore years, in an immortal work, every ſentence of which is pregnant with the deepeſt obſervations and the moſt lively images, was an undertaking ſufficient to exerciſe the genius of Tacitus himſelf during the greateſt part of his life. In the laſt years of the reign of Trajan, whilſt the victorious monarch extended the power of Rome beyond its ancient limits, the hiſtorian was deſcribing, in the ſecond and fourth books of his annals, the tyranny of Tiberius[11]; and the emperor Hadrian muſt have ſucceeded to the throne, before Tacitus, in the regular proſecution of his work, could relate the fire of the capital and the cruelty of Nero towards the unfortunate Chriſtians. At the diſtance of ſixty years, it was the duty of the annaliſt to adopt the narratives of cotemporaries; but it was natural for the philoſopher to indulge himſelf in the deſcription of the origin, the progreſs, and the character of the new ſect, not ſo much according to the knowledge or prejudices of the age of Nero, as according to thoſe of the time of Hadrian. 3. Tacitus very frequently truſts to the curioſity or reflection of his readers to ſupply thoſe intermediate circumſtances and ideas, which, in his extreme conciſeneſs, he has thought proper to ſuppreſs. We may therefore preſume to imagine ſome probable cauſe which could direct the cruelty of Nero againſt the Chriſtians of Rome, whoſe obſcurity, as well as innocence, should have shielded them from his indignation, and even from his notice. The Jews, who were numerous in the capital, and oppreſſed in

CHAP. XVI.

CHAP. XVI.

their own country, were a much fitter object for the ſuſpicions of the emperor and of the people; nor did it ſeem unlikely that a vanquiſhed nation, who already diſcovered their abhorrence of the Roman yoke, might have recourſe to the moſt atrocious means of gratifying their implacable revenge. But the Jews poſſeſſed very powerful advocates in the palace, and even in the heart of the tyrant; his wife and miſtreſs, the beautiful Poppæa, and a favourite player of the race of Abraham, who had already employed their interceſſion in behalf of the obnoxious people [40]. In their room it was neceſſary to offer ſome other victims, and it might eaſily be ſuggeſted that, although the genuine followers of Moſes were innocent of the fire of Rome, there had ariſen among them a new and pernicious ſect of GALILÆANS, which was capable of the moſt horrid crimes. Under the appellation of GALILÆANS, two diſtinctions of men were confounded, the moſt oppoſite to each other in their manners and principles; the diſciples who had embraced the faith of Jeſus of Nazareth [41], and the zealots who had followed the ſtandard of Judas the Gaulonite [42]. The former were the friends, the latter were the enemies, of humankind; and the only reſemblance between them conſiſted in the ſame inflexible conſtancy, which, in the defence of their cauſe, rendered them inſenſible of death and tortures. The followers of Judas, who impelled their countrymen into rebellion, were ſoon buried under the ruins of Jeruſalem; whilſt thoſe of Jeſus, known

CHAP. XVI.

by the more celebrated name of Chriſtians, diffuſed themſelves over the Roman empire. How natural was it for Tacitus, in the time of Hadrian, to appropriate to the Chriſtians, the guilt and the ſufferings, which he might, with far greater truth and juſtice, have attributed to a ſect whoſe odious memory was almoſt extinguiſhed! 4. Whatever opinion may be entertained of this conjecture (for it is no more than a conjecture), it is evident that the effect, as well as the cauſe, of Nero's perſecution, were confined to the walls of Rome [43]; that the religious tenets of the Galilæans, or Chriſtians, were never made a ſubject of puniſhment, or even of inquiry; and that, as the idea of their ſufferings was, for a long time, connected with the idea of cruelty and injuſtice, the moderation of ſucceeding princes inclined them to ſpare a ſect, oppreſſed by a tyrant, whoſe rage had been uſually directed againſt virtue and innocence.

Oppreſſion of the Jews and Chriſtians by Domitian.

It is ſomewhat remarkable, that the flames of war conſumed almoſt at the ſame time the temple of Jeruſalem and the Capitol of Rome [44]; and it appears no leſs ſingular, that the tribute which devotion had deſtined to the former, ſhould have been converted by the power of an aſſaulting victor to reſtore and adorn the ſplendour of the latter [45]. The emperors levied a general capitation tax on the Jewiſh people; and although the ſum aſſeſſed on the head of each individual was inconſiderable, the uſe for which it was deſigned, and the ſeverity with which it was exacted, were

CHAP. XVI.

conſidered as an intolerable grievance [46]. Since the officers of the revenue extended their injuſt claim to many perſons who were ſtrangers to the blood or religion of the Jews, it was impoſſible that the Chriſtians, who had ſo often sheltered themſelves under the shade of the ſynagogue, should now eſcape this rapacious perſecution. Anxious as they were to avoid the slighteſt infection of idolatry, their conſcience forbade them to contribute to the honour of that dæmon who had aſſumed the character of the Capitoline Jupiter. As a very numerous though declining party among the Chriſtians ſtill adhered to the law of Moſes, their efforts to diſſemble their Jewish origin were detected by the deciſive teſt of circumciſion [47]: nor were the Roman magiſtrates at leiſure to inquire into the difference of their religious tenets. Among the Chriſtians, who were brought before the tribunal of the emperor, or, as it ſeems more probable, before that of the procurator of Judæa, two perſons are ſaid to have appeared, diſtinguished by their extraction, which was more truly noble than that of the greateſt monarchs. Theſe were the grandſons of St. Jude the apoſtle, who himſelf was the brother of Jeſus Chriſt [48]. Their natural pretenſions to the throne of David might perhaps attract the reſpect of the people, and excite the jealouſy of the governor; but the meanneſs of their garb, and the ſimplicity of their anſwers, ſoon convinced him that they were neither deſirous nor capable of diſturbing the peace of the Roman empire. They frankly confeſſed their royal origin, and their near relation to the Meſ-

ſiah; but they diſclaimed any temporal views, and profeſſed that his kingdom, which they devoutly expected, was purely of a ſpiritual and angelic nature. When they were examined concerning their fortune and occupation, they ſhewed their hands hardened with daily labour, and declared that they derived their whole ſubſiſtence from the cultivation of a farm near the village of Cocaba, of the extent of about twenty-four English acres [50], and of the value of nine thouſand drachms, or three hundred pounds ſterling. The grandſons of St. Jude were diſmiſſed with compaſſion and contempt [51].

Execution of Clemens the Conſul.

But although the obſcurity of the houſe of David might protect them from the ſuſpicions of a tyrant, the preſent greatneſs of his own family alarmed the puſillanimous temper of Domitian, which could only be appeaſed by the blood of thoſe Romans whom he either feared, or hated, or eſteemed. Of the two ſons of his uncle Flavius Sabinus [52], the elder was ſoon convicted of treaſonable intentions, and the younger, who bore the name of Flavius Clemens, was indebted for his ſafety to his want of courage and ability [53]. The emperor, for a long time, diſtinguished ſo harmleſs a kinſman by his favour and protection, beſtowed on him his own niece Domitilla, adopted the children of that marriage to the hope of the ſucceſſion, and inveſted their father with the honours of the conſulship. But he had ſcarcely finished the term of his annual magiſtracy, when on a ſlight pretence he was condemned and executed; Domi-

CHAP. XVI.

tilla was banished to a desolate island on the coast of Campania [14]; and sentences either of death or of confiscation were pronounced against a great number of persons who were involved in the same accusation. The guilt imputed to their charge was that of *Atheism* and *Jewish manners* [15]; a singular association of ideas, which cannot with any propriety be applied except to the Christians, as they were obscurely and imperfectly viewed by the magistrates and by the writers of that period. On the strength of so probable an interpretation, and too eagerly admitting the suspicions of a tyrant as an evidence of their honourable crime, the church has placed both Clemens and Domitilla among its first martyrs, and has branded the cruelty of Domitian with the name of the second persecution. But this persecution (if it deserves that epithet) was of no long duration. A few months after the death of Clemens, and the banishment of Domitilla, Stephen, a freedman belonging to the latter, who had enjoyed the favour, but who had not surely embraced the faith, of his mistress, assassinated the emperor in his palace [16]. The memory of Domitian was condemned by the senate; his acts were rescinded; and under the gentle administration of Nerva, while the innocent were restored to their rank and fortunes, even the most guilty either obtained pardon or escaped punishment [17].

Ignorance of Pliny concerning the Christians.

II. About ten years afterwards, under the reign of Trajan, the younger Pliny was intrusted by his friend and master with the government of Bithynia and Pontus. He soon found himself at

a loſs to determine by what rule of juſtice or of law he ſhould direct his conduct in the execution of an office the moſt repugnant to his humanity. Pliny had never aſſiſted at any judicial proceedings againſt the Chriſtians, with whoſe name alone he ſeems to be acquainted; and he was totally uninformed with regard to the nature of their guilt, the method of their conviction, and the degree of their punishment. In this perplexity he had recourſe to his uſual expedient, of ſubmitting to the wiſdom of Trajan an impartial, and in ſome reſpects, a favourable, account of the new ſuperſtition, requeſting the emperor, that he would condeſcend to reſolve his doubts, and to inſtruct his ignorance [77]. The life of Pliny had been employed in the acquiſition of learning, and in the buſineſs of the world. Since the age of nineteen he had pleaded with diſtinction in the tribunals of Rome [78], filled a place in the ſenate, had been inveſted with the honours of the conſulſhip, and had formed very numerous connexions with every order of men, both in Italy and in the provinces. From *his* ignorance therefore we may derive ſome uſeful information. We may aſſure ourſelves, that when he accepted the government of Bithynia, there were no general laws or decrees of the ſenate in force againſt the Chriſtians; that neither Trajan nor any of his virtuous predeceſſors, whoſe edicts were received into the civil and criminal juriſprudence, had publicly declared their intentions concerning the new ſect; and that whatever proceedings had

CHAP. XVI.

CHAP. XVI.

been carried on againſt the Chriſtians, there were none of ſufficient weight and authority to eſtablish a precedent for the conduct of a Roman magiſtrate.

Trajan and his ſucceſſors eſtabliſh a legal mode of proceeding againſt them.

The anſwer of Trajan, to which the Chriſtians of the ſucceeding age have frequently appealed, diſcovers as much regard for juſtice and humanity as could be reconciled with his miſtaken notions of religious policy [11]. Inſtead of diſplaying the implacable zeal of an inquiſitor, anxious to diſcover the moſt minute particles of hereſy, and exulting in the number of his victims, the emperor expreſſes much more ſolicitude to protect the ſecurity of the innocent, than to prevent the eſcape of the guilty. He acknowledges the difficulty of fixing any general plan; but he lays down two ſalutary rules, which often afforded relief and ſupport to the diſtreſſed Chriſtians. Though he directs the magiſtrates to punish ſuch perſons as are legally convicted, he prohibits them, with a very humane inconſiſtency, from making any inquiries concerning the ſuppoſed criminals. Nor was the magiſtrate allowed to proceed on every kind of information. Anonymous charges the emperor rejects, as too repugnant to the equity of his government; and he ſtrictly requires, for the conviction of thoſe to whom the guilt of Chriſtianity is imputed, the poſitive evidence of a fair and open accuſer. It is likewiſe probable, that the perſons who aſſumed ſo invidious an office, were obliged to declare the grounds of their ſuſpicions, to ſpecify (both in reſpect to time and place) the ſecret

assemblies, which their Christian adversary had frequented, and to disclose a great number of circumstances, which were concealed with the most vigilant jealousy from the eye of the profane. If they succeeded in their prosecution, they were exposed to the resentment of a considerable and active party, to the censure of the more liberal portion of mankind, and to the ignominy which, in every age and country, has attended the character of an informer. If, on the contrary, they failed in their proofs, they incurred the severe and perhaps capital penalty, which, according to a law published by the emperor Hadrian, was inflicted on those who falsely attributed to their fellow-citizens the crime of Christianity. The violence of personal or superstitious animosity might sometimes prevail over the most natural apprehensions of disgrace and danger; but it cannot surely be imagined, that accusations of so unpromising an appearance were either lightly or frequently undertaken by the Pagan subjects of the Roman empire [**].

Popular clamours.

The expedient which was employed to elude the prudence of the laws, affords a sufficient proof how effectually they disappointed the mischievous designs of private malice or superstitious zeal. In a large and tumultuous assembly the restraints of fear and shame, so forcible on the minds of individuals, are deprived of the greatest part of their influence. The pious Christian, as he was desirous to obtain or to escape the glory of martyrdom, expected, either with im-

CHAP. XVI.

patience or with terror, the ſtated returns of the public games and feſtivals. On thoſe occaſions, the inhabitants of the great cities of the empire were collected in the circus of the theatre, where every circumſtance of the place, as well as of the ceremony, contributed to kindle their devotion, and to extinguish their humanity. Whilſt the numerous ſpectators, crowned with garlands, perfumed with incenſe, purified with the blood of victims, and ſurrounded with the altars and ſtatues of their tutelar deities, reſigned themſelves to the enjoyment of pleaſures, which they conſidered as an eſſential part of their religious worſhip; they recollected that the Chriſtians alone abhorred the gods of mankind, and by their abſence and melancholy on theſe ſolemn feſtivals, ſeemed to inſult or to lament the public felicity. If the empire had been afflicted by any recent calamity, by a plague, a famine, or an unſucceſsful war; if the Tyber had, or if the Nile had not, riſen beyond its banks; if the earth had ſhaken, or if the temperate order of the ſeaſons had been interrupted, the ſuperſtitious Pagans were convinced, that the crimes and the impiety of the Chriſtians, who were ſpared by the exceſſive lenity of the government, had at length provoked the Divine Juſtice. It was not among a licentious and exaſperated populace, that the forms of legal proceedings could be obſerved; it was not in an amphitheatre, ſtained with the blood of wild beaſts and gladiators, that the voice of compaſſion could be heard. The impatient

clamours of the multitude denounced the Chriſtians as the enemies of gods and men, doomed them to the ſevereſt tortures, and venturing to accuſe by name ſome of the moſt diſtinguished of the new ſectaries, required with irreſiſtible vehemence that they ſhould be inſtantly apprehended and caſt to the lions [61]. The provincial governors and magiſtrates who preſided in the public ſpectacles were uſually inclined to gratify the inclinations, and to appeaſe the rage, of the people, by the ſacrifice of a few obnoxious victims. But the wiſdom of the emperors protected the church from the danger of theſe tumultuous clamours and irregular accuſations, which they juſtly cenſured as repugnant both to the firmneſs and to the equity of their adminiſtration. The edicts of Hadrian and of Antoninus Pius expreſsly declared, that the voice of the multitude ſhould never be admitted as legal evidence to convict or to punish thoſe unfortunate perſons who had embraced the enthuſiaſm of the Chriſtians [62].

CHAP. XVI.

III. Punishment was not the inevitable conſequence of conviction, and the Chriſtians, whoſe guilt was the moſt clearly proved by the teſtimony of witneſſes, or even by their voluntary confeſſion, ſtill retained in their own power the alternative of life or death. It was not ſo much the paſt offence, as the actual reſiſtance, which excited the indignation of the magiſtrate. He was perſuaded that he offered them an eaſy pardon, ſince if they conſented to caſt a few grains of incenſe upon the altar, they were diſmiſſed

Trials of the Chriſtians.

CHAP. XVI.

from the tribunal in ſafety and with applauſe. It was eſteemed the duty of a humane judge to endeavour to reclaim, rather than to punish, thoſe deluded enthuſiaſts. Varying his tone according to the age, the ſex, or the ſituation of the priſoners, he frequently condeſcended to ſet before their eyes every circumſtance which could render life more pleaſing, or death more terrible; and to ſolicit, nay to intreat, them, that they would ſhew ſome compaſſion to themſelves, to their families, and to their friends [13]. If threats and perſuaſions proved ineffectual, he had often recourſe to violence; the ſcourge and the rack were called in to ſupply the deficiency of argument, and every art of cruelty was employed to ſubdue ſuch inflexible, and, as it appeared to the Pagans ſuch criminal, obſtinacy. The ancient apologiſts of Chriſtianity have cenſured, with equal truth and ſeverity, the irregular conduct of their perſecutors, who, contrary to every principle of judicial proceeding, admitted the uſe of torture, in order to obtain, not a confeſſion, but a denial, of the crime which was the object of their inquiry [14]. The monks of ſucceeding ages, who, in their peaceful ſolitudes, entertained themſelves with diverſifying the deaths and ſufferings of the primitive martyrs, have frequently invented torments of a much more refined and ingenious nature. In particular, it has pleaſed them to ſuppoſe, that the zeal of the Roman magiſtrates, diſdaining every conſideration of moral virtue or public decency, endeavoured to ſeduce thoſe whom they were

unable to vanquish, and that by their orders the moſt brutal violence was offered to thoſe whom they found it impoſſible to ſeduce. It is related, that pious females, who were prepared to deſpiſe death, were ſometimes condemned to a more ſevere trial, and called upon to determine whether they ſet a higher value on their religion or on their chaſtity. The youths to whoſe licentious embraces they were abandoned, received a ſolemn exhortation from the judge, to exert their moſt ſtrenuous efforts to maintain the honour of Venus againſt the impious virgin who refuſed to burn incenſe on her altars. Their violence however was commonly diſappointed, and the ſeaſonable interpoſition of ſome miraculous power preſerved the chaſte ſpouſes of Chriſt from the diſhonour even of an involuntary defeat. We ſhould not indeed neglect to remark, that the more ancient as well as authentic memorials of the church are ſeldom polluted with theſe extravagant and indecent fictions [55].

CHAP. XVI.

Humanity of the Roman magiſtrates.

The total diſregard of truth and probability in the repreſentation of theſe primitive martyrdoms was occaſioned by a very natural miſtake. The eccleſiaſtical writers of the fourth or fifth centuries aſcribed to the magiſtrates of Rome the ſame degree of implacable and unrelenting zeal which filled their own breaſts againſt the heretics or the idolators of their own times. It is not improbable that ſome of thoſe perſons who were raiſed to the dignities of the empire, might have imbibed the prejudices of the populace, and that the cruel diſpoſition of others might occaſionally

CHAP. XVI.

be ſtimulated by motives of avarice or of perſonal reſentment [66]. But it is certain, and we may appeal to the grateful confeſſions of the firſt Chriſtians, that the greateſt part of thoſe magiſtrates who exerciſed in the provinces the authority of the emperor, or of the ſenate, and to whoſe hands alone the juriſdiction of life and death was intruſted, behaved like men of poliſhed manners and liberal educations, who reſpected the rules of juſtice, and who were converſant with the precepts of philoſophy. They frequently declined the odious task of perſecution, diſmiſſed the charge with contempt, or ſuggeſted to the accuſed Chriſtian ſome legal evaſion, by which he might elude the ſeverity of the laws [67]. Whenever they were inveſted with a diſcretionary power [68], they uſed it much leſs for the oppreſſion, than for the relief and benefit of the afflicted church. They were far from condemning all the Chriſtians who were accuſed before their tribunal, and very far from punishing with death all thoſe who were convicted of an obſtinate adherence to the new ſuperſtition. Contenting themſelves, for the moſt part, with the milder chaſtiſements of impriſonment, exile, or ſlavery in the mines [69], they left the unhappy victims of their juſtice ſome reaſon to hope, that a proſperous event, the acceſſion, the marriage, or the triumph of an emperor, might ſpeedily reſtore them by a general pardon to their former ſtate. The martyrs, devoted to immediate execution by the Roman magiſtrates, appear to have been ſelected from

Inconſiderable number of martyrs.

the moſt oppoſite extremes. They were either bishops and presbyters, the perſons the moſt diſtinguished among the Chriſtians by their rank and influence, and whoſe example might ſtrike terror into the whole ſect [70]; or elſe they were the meaneſt and moſt abject among them, particularly thoſe of the ſervile condition whoſe lives were eſteemed of little value, and whoſe ſufferings were viewed by the ancients with too careleſs an indifference [71]. The learned Origen, who, from his experience as well as reading, was intimately acquainted with the hiſtory of the Chriſtians, declares, in the moſt expreſs terms, that the number of martyrs was very inconſiderable [72]. His authority would alone be ſufficient to annihilate that formidable army of martyrs, whoſe relics, drawn for the moſt part from the catacombs of Rome, have replenished ſo many churches [73], and whoſe marvellous atchievements have been the ſubject of ſo many volumes of Holy Romance [74]. But the general aſſertion of Origen may be explained and confirmed by the particular teſtimony of his friend Dionyſius, who, in the immenſe city of Alexandria, and under the rigorous perſecution of Decius, reckons only ten men and ſeven women who ſuffered for the profeſſion of the Chriſtian name [75].

CHAP. XVI.

During the ſame period of perſecution, the zealous, the eloquent, the ambitious Cyprian governed the church, not only of Carthage, but even of Africa. He poſſeſſed every quality which could engage the reverence of the faithful, or

Example of Cyprian biſhop of Carthage.

CHAP. XVI.

provoke the ſuſpicions and reſentment of the Pagan magiſtrates. His character as well as his ſtation ſeemed to mark out that holy prelate as the moſt diſtinguished object of envy and of danger [76]. The experience, however, of the life of Cyprian, is ſufficient to prove, that our fancy has exaggerated the perilous ſituation of a Chriſtian bishop; and that the dangers to which he was expoſed were leſs imminent than thoſe which temporal ambition is always prepared to encounter in the purſuit of honours. Four Roman emperors, with their families, their favourites, and their adherents, perished by the ſword in the ſpace of ten years, during which, the bishop of Carthage guided by his authority and eloquence the counſels of the African church. It was only in the third year of his adminiſtration, that he had reaſon, during a few months, to apprehend the ſevere edicts of Decius, the vigilance of the magiſtrate, and the clamours of the multitude, who loudly demanded, that Cyprian, the leader of the Chriſtians, should be thrown to the lions. Prudence ſuggeſted the neceſſity of a temporary retreat, and the voice of prudence was obeyed. He withdrew himſelf into an obſcure ſolitude, from whence he could maintain a conſtant correſpondence with the clergy and people of Carthage; and concealing himſelf till the tempeſt was paſt, he preſerved his life, without relinquishing either his power or his reputation. His extreme caution did not however eſcape the cenſure of the more rigid Chriſtians who lament-

His danger and flight.

ed,

ed, or the reproaches of his perſonal enemies who inſulted, a conduct which they conſidered as a puſillanimous and criminal deſertion of the moſt ſacred duty [77]. The propriety of reſerving himſelf for the future exigencies of the church, the example of ſeveral holy biſhops [78], and the divine admonitions which, as he declares himſelf, he frequently received in viſions and extaſies, were the reaſons alleged in his juſtification [79]. But his beſt apology may be found in the cheerful reſolution, with which, about eight years afterwards, he ſuffered death in the cauſe of religion. The authentic hiſtory of his martyrdom has been recorded with unuſual candour and impartiality. A ſhort abſtract therefore of its moſt important circumſtances will convey the cleareſt information of the ſpirit, and of the forms, of the Roman perſecutions [80]. CHAP. XVI.

When Valerian was conſul for the third, and Gallienus for the fourth, time; Paternus, proconſul of Africa, ſummoned Cyprian to appear in his private council-chamber. He there acquainted him with the Imperial mandate which he had juſt received [81], that thoſe who had abandoned the Roman religion, ſhould immediately return to the practice of the ceremonies of their anceſtors. Cyprian replied without heſitation, that he was a Chriſtian and a biſhop, devoted to the worſhip of the true and only Deity, to whom he offered up his daily ſupplications for the ſafety and proſperity of the two emperors, his lawful ſovereigns. With modeſt confidence he pleaded A. D. 257. His baniſhment.

CHAP. XVI.

the privilege of a citizen, in refuſing to give any anſwer to ſome invidious and indeed illegal queſtions which the proconſul had propoſed. A ſentence of banishment was pronounced as the penalty of Cyprian's diſobedience; and he was conducted without delay to Curubis, a free and maritime city of Zeugitania, in a pleaſant ſituation, a fertile territory, and at the diſtance of about forty miles from Carthage [82]. The exiled bishop enjoyed the conveniencies of life and the conſciouſneſs of virtue. His reputation was diffuſed over Africa and Italy; an account of his behaviour was published for the edification of the Chriſtian world [83]; and his ſolitude was frequently interrupted by the letters, the viſits, and the congratulations of the faithful. On the arrival of a new proconſul in the province, the fortune of Cyprian appeared for ſome time to wear a ſtill more favourable aſpect. He was recalled from banishment; and though not yet permitted to return to Carthage, his own gardens in the neighbourhood of the capital were aſſigned for the place of his reſidence [84].

His condemnation.

At length, exactly one year [85] after Cyprian was firſt apprehended, Galerius Maximus, proconſul of Africa, received the Imperial warrant for the execution of the Chriſtian teachers. The bishop of Carthage was ſenſible that he should be ſingled out for one of the firſt victims; and the frailty of nature tempted him to withdraw himſelf by a ſecret flight, from the danger and the honour of martyrdom: but ſoon recovering that

fortitude which his character required, he returned to his gardens, and patiently expected the miniſters of death. Two officers of rank, who were intruſted with that commiſſion, placed Cyprian between them in a chariot; and as the proconſul was not then at leiſure, they conducted him, not to a priſon, but to a private houſe in Carthage, which belonged to one of them. An elegant ſupper was provided for the entertainment of the biſhop, and his Chriſtian friends were permitted for the laſt time to enjoy his ſociety, whilſt the ſtreets were filled with a multitude of the faithful, anxious and alarmed at the approaching fate of their ſpiritual father [16]. In the morning he appeared before the tribunal of the proconſul, who, after informing himſelf of the name and ſituation of Cyprian, commanded him to offer ſacrifice, and preſſed him to reflect on the conſequences of his diſobedience. The refuſal of Cyprian was firm and deciſive; and the magiſtrate, when he had taken the opinion of his council, pronounced with ſome reluctance the ſentence of death. It was conceived in the following terms: "That „ Thaſcius Cyprianus ſhould be immediately „ beheaded, as the enemy of the gods of Rome, „ and as the chief and ringleader of a criminal „ aſſociation, which he had ſeduced into an im„ pious reſiſtance againſt the laws of the moſt „ holy emperors, Valerian and Gallienus [17]." The manner of his execution was the mildeſt and leaſt painful that could be inflicted on a perſon convicted of any capital offence: nor was the

CHAP. XVI.

CHAP. XVI.

uſe of torture admitted to obtain from the biſhop of Carthage either the recantation of his principles, or the diſcovery of his accomplices.

His martyrdom.

As ſoon as the ſentence was proclaimed, a general cry of "We will die with him," aroſe at once among the liſtening multitude of Chriſtians who waited before the palace gates. The generous effuſions of their zeal and affection were neither ſerviceable to Cyprian nor dangerous to themſelves. He was led away under a guard of tribunes and centurions, without reſiſtance and without inſult, to the place of his execution, a ſpacious and level plain near the city, which was already filled with great numbers of ſpectators. His faithful presbyters and deacons were permitted to accompany their holy biſhop. They aſſiſted him in laying aſide his upper garment, ſpread linen on the ground to catch the precious relics of his blood, and received his orders to beſtow five-and-twenty pieces of gold on the executioner. The martyr then covered his face with his hands, and at one blow his head was ſeparated from his body. His corpſe remained during ſome hours expoſed to the curioſity of the Gentiles: but in the night it was removed, and tranſported in a triumphal proceſſion and with a ſplendid illumination to the burial-place of the Chriſtians. The funeral of Cyprian was publicly celebrated without receiving any interruption from the Roman magiſtrates; and thoſe among the faithful who had performed the laſt offices to his perſon and his memory, were ſecure from the

danger of inquiry or of punishment. It is remarkable, that of ſo great a multitude of biſhops in the province of Africa, Cyprian was the firſt who was eſteemed worthy to obtain the crown of martyrdom [11].

Various incitements to martyrdom.

It was in the choice of Cyprian either to die a martyr or to live an apoſtate: but on that choice depended the alternative of honour or infamy. Could we ſuppoſe that the biſhop of Carthage had employed the profeſſion of the Chriſtian faith only as the inſtrument of his avarice or ambition, it was ſtill incumbent on him to ſupport the character which he had aſſumed [12]; and, if he poſſeſſed the ſmalleſt degree of manly fortitude, rather to expoſe himſelf to the moſt cruel tortures, than by a ſingle act to exchange the reputation of a whole life, for the abhorrence of his Chriſtian brethren and the contempt of the Gentile world. But if the zeal of Cyprian was ſupported by the ſincere conviction of the truth of thoſe doctrines which he preached, the crown of martyrdom muſt have appeared to him as an object of deſire rather than of terror. It is not eaſy to extract any diſtinct ideas from the vague though eloquent declamations of the Fathers, or to aſcertain the degree of immortal glory and happineſs which they confidently promiſed to thoſe who were ſo fortunate as to ſhed their blood in the cauſe of religion [13]. They inculcated with becoming diligence, that the fire of martyrdom ſupplied every defect and expiated every ſin; that while the ſouls of ordi-

CHAP. XVI.

nary Chriſtians were obliged to paſs through a ſlow and painful purification, the triumphant ſufferers entered into the immediate fruition of eternal bliſs, where, in the ſociety of the patriarchs, the apoſtles, and the prophets, they reigned with Chriſt, and acted as his aſſeſſors in the univerſal judgment of mankind. The aſſurance of a laſting reputation upon earth, a motive ſo congenial to the vanity of human nature, often ſerved to animate the courage of the martyrs. The honours which Rome or Athens beſtowed on thoſe citizens who had fallen in the cauſe of their country, were cold and unmeaning demonſtrations of reſpect, when compared with the ardent gratitude and devotion which the primitive church expreſſed towards the victorious champions of the faith. The annual commemoration of their virtues and ſufferings was obſerved as a ſacred ceremony, and at length terminated in religious worship. Among the Chriſtians who had publicly confeſſed their religious principles, thoſe, who (as it very frequently happened) had been diſmiſſed from the tribunal or the priſons of the Pagan magiſtrates, obtained ſuch honours as were juſtly due to their imperfect martyrdom and their generous reſolution. The moſt pious females courted the permiſſion of imprinting kiſſes on the fetters which they had worn, and on the wounds which they had received. Their perſons were eſteemed holy, their deciſions were admitted with deference, and they too often abuſed, by their ſpiritual pride and licentious manners, the pre-eminence which their zeal

and intrepidity had acquired [92]. Diſtinctions like theſe, whilſt they diſplay the exalted merit, betray the inconſiderable number of thoſe who ſuffered, and of thoſe who died for the profeſſion of Chriſtianity.

Ardour of the firſt Chriſtians.

The ſober diſcretion of the preſent age will more readily cenſure than admire, but can more eaſily admire than imitate, the fervour of the firſt Chriſtians, who, according to the lively expreſſion of Sulpicius Severus, deſired martyrdom with more eagerneſs than his own contemporaries ſolicited a biſhopric [93]. The epiſtles which Ignatius compoſed as he was carried in chains through the cities of Aſia, breathe ſentiments the moſt repugnant to the ordinary feelings of human nature. He earneſtly beſeeches the Romans, that when he ſhould be expoſed in the amphitheatre, they would not, by their kind but unſeaſonable interceſſion, deprive him of the crown of glory; and he declares his reſolution to provoke and irritate the wild beaſts which might be employed as the inſtruments of his death [94]. Some ſtories are related of the courage of martyrs, who actually performed what Ignatius had intended; who exaſperated the fury of the lions, preſſed the executioner to haſten his office, cheerfully leaped into the fires which were kindled to conſume them, and diſcovered a ſenſation of joy and pleaſure in the midſt of the moſt exquiſite tortures. Several examples have been preſerved of a zeal impatient of thoſe reſtraints which the emperors had provided for the

CHAP. XVI.

ſecurity of the church. The Chriſtians ſometimes ſupplied by their voluntary declaration the want of an accuſer, rudely diſturbed the public ſervice of Paganiſm [94], and rushing in crowds round the tribunal of the magiſtrates, called upon them to pronounce and to inflict the ſentence of the law. The behaviour of the Chriſtians was too remarkable to eſcape the notice of the ancient philoſophers; but they ſeem to have conſidered it with much leſs admiration than aſtoniſhment. Incapable of conceiving the motives which ſometimes tranſported the fortitude of believers beyond the bounds of prudence or reaſon, they treated ſuch an eagerneſs to die as the ſtrange reſult of obſtinate deſpair, of ſtupid inſenſibility, or of ſuperſtitious phrenzy [95]. "Unhappy men," exclaimed the proconſul Antoninus to the Chriſtians of Aſia, "unhappy men, "if you are thus weary of your lives, is it ſo "difficult for you to find ropes and precipices"?" He was extremely cautious (as it is obſerved by a learned and pious hiſtorian) of punishing men who had found no accuſers but themſelves, the Imperial laws not having made any proviſion for ſo unexpected a caſe; condemning therefore a few, as a warning to their brethren, he diſmiſſed the multitude with indignation and contempt [96]. Notwithſtanding this real or affected diſdain, the intrepid conſtancy of the faithful was productive of more ſalutary effects on thoſe minds which nature or grace had diſpoſed for the eaſy reception of religious truth.

On theſe melancholy occaſions, there were many among the Gentiles who pitied, who admired, and who were converted. The generous enthuſiaſm was communicated from the ſufferer to the ſpectators; and the blood of martyrs, according to a well-known obſervation, became the ſeed of the church. CHAP. XVI.

But although devotion had raiſed, and eloquence continued to inflame, this fever of the mind, it inſenſibly gave way to the more natural hopes and fears of the human heart; to the love of life, the apprehenſion of pain, and the horror of diſſolution. The more prudent rulers of the Church found themſelves obliged to reſtrain the indiſcreet ardour of their followers, and to diſtruſt a conſtancy which too often abandoned them in the hour of trial [22]. As the lives of the faithful became leſs mortified and auſtere, they were every day leſs ambitious of the honours of martyrdom; and the ſoldiers of Chriſt, inſtead of diſtinguiſhing themſelves by voluntary deeds of heroiſm, frequently deſerted their poſt, and fled in confuſion before the enemy whom it was their duty to reſiſt. There were three methods, however, of eſcaping the flames of perſecution, which were not attended with an equal degree of guilt: the firſt indeed was generally allowed to be innocent; the ſecond was of a doubtful, or at leaſt of a venial, nature; but the third implied a direct and criminal apoſtacy from the Chriſtian faith. Gradual relaxation. Three methods of eſcaping martyrdom.

I. A modern inquiſitor would hear with ſurpriſe, that whenever an information was given

CHAP. XVI.

to a Roman magiſtrate of any perſon within his juriſdiction who had embraced the ſect of the Chriſtians, the charge was communicated to the party accuſed, and that a convenient time was allowed him to ſettle his domeſtic concerns, and to prepare an anſwer to the crime which was imputed to him [99]. If he entertained any doubt of his own conſtancy, ſuch a delay afforded him the opportunity of preſerving his life and honour by flight, of withdrawing himſelf into ſome obſcure retirement or ſome diſtant province, and of patiently expecting the return of peace and ſecurity. A meaſure ſo conſonant to reaſon was ſoon authorized by the advice and example of the moſt holy prelates; and ſeems to have been cenſured by few, except by the Montaniſts, who deviated into hereſy by their ſtrict and obſtinate adherence to the rigour of ancient diſcipline [100]. II. The provincial governors, whoſe zeal was leſs prevalent than their avarice, had countenanced the practice of ſelling certificates (or libels as they were called), which atteſted, that the perſons therein mentioned had complied with the laws, and ſacrificed to the Roman deities. By producing theſe falſe declarations, the opulent and timid Chriſtians were enabled to ſilence the malice of an informer, and to reconcile in ſome meaſure their ſafety with their religion. A ſlight penance atoned for this profane diſſimulation [101]. III. In every perſecution there were great numbers of unworthy Chriſtians, who publicly diſowned or renounced the faith which they had profeſſed; and who confirmed the ſincerity of their abjuration,

by the legal acts of burning incenſe or of offering ſacrifices. Some of theſe apoſtates had yielded on the firſt menace or exhortation of the magiſtrate; whilſt the patience of others had been ſubdued by the length and repetition of tortures. The affrighted countenances of ſome betrayed their inward remorſe, while others advanced with confidence and alacrity to the altars of the gods [102]. But the diſguiſe, which fear had impoſed, ſubſiſted no longer than the preſent danger. As ſoon as the ſeverity of the perſecution was abated, the doors of the churches were aſſailed by the returning multitude of penitents, who deteſted their idolatrous ſubmiſſion, and who ſolicited with equal ardour, but with various ſucceſs, their re-admiſſion into the ſociety of Chriſtians [103].

Alternatives of ſeverity and toleration.

IV. Notwithſtanding the general rules, eſtabliſhed for the conviction and punishment of the Chriſtians, the fate of thoſe ſectaries, in an extenſive and arbitrary government, muſt ſtill, in a great meaſure, have depended on their own behaviour, the circumſtances of the times, and the temper of their ſupreme as well as ſubordinate rulers. Zeal might ſometimes provoke, and prudence might ſometimes avert or aſſuage, the ſuperſtitious fury of the Pagans. A variety of motives might diſpoſe the provincial governors either to enforce or to relax the execution of the laws; and of theſe motives, the moſt forcible was their regard not only for the public edicts, but for the ſecret intentions of the emperor, a glance from whoſe eye was ſufficient to kindle or to extinguiſh the flames of perſecution. As often

CHAP. XVI.

as any occaſional ſeverities were exerciſed in the different parts of the empire, the primitive Chriſtians lamented and perhaps magnified their own ſufferings; but the celebrated number of *ten* perſecutions has been determined by the eccleſiaſtical writers of the fifth century, who poſſeſſed a more diſtinct view of the proſperous or adverſe fortunes of the church, from the age of Nero to that of Diocletian. The ingenious parallels of the *ten* plagues of Egypt, and of the *ten* horns of the Apocalypſe, firſt ſuggeſted this calculation to their minds; and in their application of the faith of prophecy to the truth of hiſtory, they were careful to ſelect thoſe reigns which were indeed the moſt hoſtile to the Chriſtian cauſe [104]. But theſe tranſient perſecutions ſerved only to revive the zeal, and to reſtore the diſcipline of the faithful: and the moments of extraordinary rigour were compenſated by much longer intervals of peace and ſecurity. The indifference of ſome princes, and the indulgence of others, permitted the Chriſtians to enjoy, though not perhaps a legal, yet an actual and public, toleration of their religion.

The ten perſecutions.

The apology of Tertullian contains two very ancient, very ſingular, but at the ſame time very ſuſpicious inſtances of Imperial clemency; the edicts published by Tiberius, and by Marcus Antoninus, and deſigned not only to protect the innocence of the Chriſtians, but even to proclaim thoſe ſtupendous miracles which had atteſted the truth of their doctrine. The firſt of theſe examples is attended with ſome difficulties which might

Suppoſed edicts of Tiberius and Marcus Antoninus.

perplex a ſceptical mind [101]. We are required to believe, *that* Pontius Pilate informed the emperor of the unjuſt ſentence of death which he had pronounced againſt an innocent, and, as it appeared, a divine, perſon; and that, without acquiring the merit, he expoſed himſelf to the danger, of martyrdom; *that* Tiberius, who avowed his contempt for all religion, immediately conceived the deſign of placing the Jewish Meſſiah among the gods of Rome; *that* his ſervile ſenate ventured to diſobey the commands of their maſter; *that* Tiberius, inſtead of reſenting their refuſal, contented himſelf with protecting the Chriſtians from the ſeverity of the laws, many years before ſuch laws were enacted, or before the church had aſſumed any diſtinct name or exiſtence; and laſtly, *that* the memory of this extraordinary tranſaction was preſerved in the moſt public and authentic records, which eſcaped the knowledge of the hiſtorians of Greece and Rome, and were only viſible to the eyes of an African Chriſtian, who compoſed his apology one hundred and ſixty years after the death of Tiberius. The edict of Marcus Antoninus is ſuppoſed to have been the effect of his devotion and gratitude, for the miraculous deliverance which he had obtained in the Marcomannic war. The diſtreſs of the legions, the ſeaſonable tempeſt of rain and hail, of thunder and of lightning, and the diſmay and defeat of the barbarians, have been celebrated by the eloquence of ſeveral Pagan writers. If there were any Chriſtians in that army, it was natural

CHAP. XVI.

CHAP. XVI.

that they should aſcribe ſome merit to the fervent prayers, which, in the moment of danger, they had offered up for their own and the public ſafety. But we are ſtill aſſured by monuments of braſs and marble, by the Imperial medals, and by the Antonine column, that neither the prince nor the people entertained any ſenſe of this ſignal obligation, ſince they unanimously attribute their deliverance to the providence of Jupiter, and to the interpoſition of Mercury. During the whole courſe of his reign, Marcus deſpiſed the Chriſtians as a philoſopher, and punished them as a ſovereign [106].

State of the Chriſtians in the reigns of Commodus and Severus. A. D. 180.

By a ſingular fatality, the hardships which they had endured under the government of a virtuous prince, immediately ceaſed on the acceſſion of a tyrant, and as none except themſelves had experienced the injuſtice of Marcus, ſo they alone were protected by the lenity of Commodus. The celebrated Marcia, the moſt favoured of his concubines, and who at length contrived the murder of her Imperial lover, entertained a ſingular affection for the oppreſſed church; and though it was impoſſible that she could reconcile the practice of vice with the precepts of the Goſpel, she might hope to atone for the frailties of her ſex and profeſſion, by declaring herſelf the patroneſs of the Chriſtians [107]. Under the gracious protection of Marcia, they paſſed in ſafety the thirteen years of a cruel tyranny; and when the empire was eſtabliſhed in the houſe of Severus, they formed a domeſtic but

more honourable connexion with the new court. The emperor was perſuaded, that, in a dangerous ſickneſs, he had derived ſome benefit, either ſpiritual or phyſical, from the holy oil, with which one of his ſlaves had anointed him. He always treated with peculiar diſtinction ſeveral perſons of both ſexes who had embraced the new religion. The nurſe as well as the preceptor of Caracalla were Chriſtians; and if that young prince ever betrayed a ſentiment of humanity, it was occaſioned by an incident, which, however, trifling, bore ſome relation to the cauſe of Chriſtianity [108]. Under the reign of Severus, the fury of the populace was checked; the rigour of ancient laws was for ſome time ſuſpended; and the provincial governors were ſatisfied with receiving an annual preſent from the churches within their juriſdiction, as the price, or as the reward, of their moderation [109]. The controverſy concerning the preciſe time of the celebration of Eaſter armed the biſhops of Aſia and Italy againſt each other, and was conſidered as the moſt important buſineſs of this period of leiſure and tranquillity [110]. Nor was the peace of the church interrupted, till the increaſing numbers of proſelytes ſeem at length to have attracted the attention, and to have alienated the mind, of Severus. With the deſign of reſtraining the progreſs of Chriſtianity, he published an edict, which, though it was deſigned to affect only the new converts, could not be carried into ſtrict execution, without expoſing to danger and punishment the moſt zealous of their teachers and

CHAP. XVI.

A. D. 198.

CHAP. XVI.

missionaries. In this mitigated persecution, we may still discover the indulgent spirit of Rome and of Polytheism, which so readily admitted every excuse in favour of those who practised the religious ceremonies of their fathers [111].

Of the successors of Severus. A. D. 211—249.

But the laws which Severus had enacted, soon expired with the authority of that emperor; and the Christians, after this accidental tempest, enjoyed a calm of thirty-eight years [112]. Till this period they had usually held their assemblies in private houses and sequestered places. They were now permitted to erect and consecrate convenient edifices for the purpose of religious worship [113]; to purchase lands, even at Rome itself, for the use of the community; and to conduct the elections of their ecclesiastical ministers in so public, but at the same time in so exemplary a manner, as to deserve the respectful attention of the Gentiles [114]. This long repose of the church was accompanied with dignity. The reigns of those princes who derived their extraction from the Asiatic provinces, proved the most favourable to the Christians; the eminent persons of the sect, instead of being reduced to implore the protection of a slave or concubine, were admitted into the palace in the honourable characters of priests and philosophers; and their mysterious doctrines, which were already diffused among the people, insensibly attracted the curiosity of their sovereign. When the empress Mammæa passed through Antioch, she expressed a desire of conversing with the celebrated Origen, the fame of whose piety and learning was spread over the East.

East. Origen obeyed so flattering an invitation, and though he could not expect to succeed in the conversion of an artful and ambitious woman, she listened with pleasure to his eloquent exhortations, and honourably dismissed him to his retirement in Palestine [115]. The sentiments of Mammæa were adopted by her son Alexander, and the philosophic devotion of that emperor was marked by a singular but injudicious regard for the Christian Religion. In his domestic chapel he placed the statues of Abraham, of Orpheus, of Apollonius, and of Christ, as an honour justly due to those respectable sages who had instructed mankind in the various modes of addressing their homage to the supreme and universal Deity [116]. A purer faith, as well as worship, was openly professed and practised, among his household. Bishops, perhaps for the first time, were seen at court; and, after the death of Alexander, when the inhuman Maximin discharged his fury on the favourites and servants of his unfortunate benefactor, a great number of Christians, of every rank, and of both sexes, were involved in the promiscuous massacre, which, on their account, has improperly received the name of Persecution [117]. CHAP. XVI. A. D. 235.

Of Maximin, Philip, and Decius.

Notwithstanding the cruel disposition of Maximin; the effects of his resentment against the Christians were of a very local and temporary nature, and the pious Origen, who had been proscribed as a devoted victim, was still reserved to convey the truths of the Gospel to the ear of

CHAP. XVI. A. D. 244.

monarchs [118]. He addreſſed ſeveral edifying letters to the emperor Philip, to his wife, and to his mother; and as ſoon as that prince, who was born in the neighbourhood of Paleſtine, had uſurped the Imperial ſceptre, the Chriſtians acquired a friend and a protector. The public and even partial favour of Philip towards the ſectaries of the new religion, and his conſtant reverence for the miniſters of the church, gave ſome colour to the ſuſpicion, which prevailed in his own times, that the emperor himſelf was become a convert to the faith [119]; and afforded ſome grounds for a fable which was afterwards invented, that he had been purified by confeſſion and penance from the guilt contracted by the murder of his innocent predeceſſor [120]. The fall of Philip introduced, with the change of maſters, a new ſyſtem of government, ſo oppreſſive to the Chriſtians, that their former condition, ever ſince the time of Domitian, was repreſented as a ſtate of perfect freedom and ſecurity, if compared with the rigorous treatment which they experienced under the short reign of Decius [121]. The virtues of that prince will ſcarcely allow us to ſuſpect that he was actuated by a reſentment againſt the favourites of his predeceſſor, and it is more reaſonable to believe, that in the proſecution of his general deſign to reſtore the purity of Roman manners, he was deſirous of delivering the empire from what he condemned as a recent and criminal ſuperſtition. The bishops of the moſt conſiderable cities were removed by exile or death: the vigilance of the magiſtrates

A. D. 249.

CHAP. XVI.

prevented the clergy of Rome during sixteen months from proceeding to a new election; and it was the opinion of the Christians, that the emperor would more patiently endure a competitor for the purple, than a bishop in the capital [122]. Were it possible to suppose that the penetration of Decius had discovered pride under the disguise of humility, or that he could foresee the temporal dominion which might insensibly arise from the claims of spiritual authority, we might be less surprised, that he should consider the successors of St. Peter as the most formidable rivals to those of Augustus.

Of Valerian, Gallienus, and his successors. A. D. 253—260.

The administration of Valerian was distinguished by a levity and inconstancy, ill-suited to the gravity of the *Roman Censor*. In the first part of his reign, he surpassed in clemency those princes who had been suspected of an attachment to the Christian faith. In the last three years and a half, listening to the insinuations of a minister addicted to the superstitions of Egypt, he adopted the maxims, and imitated the severity, of his predecessor Decius [123]. The accession of Gallienus, which increased the calamities of the empire, restored peace to the church; and the Christians obtained the free exercise of their religion, by an edict addressed to the bishops, and conceived in such terms as seemed to acknowledge their office and public character [124]. The ancient laws, without being formally repealed, were suffered to sink into oblivion; and (excepting only some hostile intentions which are attributed to the emperor Aurelian [125]) the disciples

CHAP. XVI.

of Chriſt paſſed above forty years in a ſtate of proſperity, far more dangerous to their virtue than the ſevereſt trials of perſecution.

Paul of Samoſata, his manners. A. D. 260.

The ſtory of Paul of Samoſata, who filled the metropolitan ſee of Antioch, while the Eaſt was in the hands of Odenathus and Zenobia, may ſerve to illuſtrate the condition and character of the times. The wealth of that prelate was a ſufficient evidence of his guilt, ſince it was neither derived from the inheritance of his fathers, nor acquired by the arts of honeſt induſtry. But Paul conſidered the ſervice of the church as a very lucrative profeſſion [126]. His eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction was venal and rapacious; he extorted frequent contributions from the moſt opulent of the faithful, and converted to his own uſe a conſiderable part of the public revenue. By his pride and luxury, the Chriſtian religion was rendered odious in the eyes of the Gentiles. His council chamber and his throne, the ſplendour with which he appeared in public, the ſuppliant crowd who ſolicited his attention, the multitude of letters and petitions to which he dictated his anſwers, and the perpetual hurry of buſineſs in which he was involved, were circumſtances much better ſuited to the ſtate of a civil magiſtrate [127], than to the humility of a primitive biſhop. When he harangued his people from the pulpit, Paul affected the figurative ſtyle and the theatrical geſtures of an Aſiatic ſophiſt, while the cathedral reſounded with the loudeſt and moſt extravagant acclamations in the praiſe of his divine eloquence. Againſt thoſe who reſiſted his power,

or refuſed to flatter his vanity, the prelate of Antioch was arrogant, rigid, and inexorable; but he relaxed the diſcipline, and lavished the treaſures, of the church on his dependent clergy, who were permitted to imitate their maſter in the gratification of every ſenſual appetite. For Paul indulged himſelf very freely in the pleaſures of the table, and he had received into the epiſcopal palace two young and beautiful women, as the conſtant companions of his leiſure moments [128].

He is degraded from the ſee of Antioch. A. D. 270.

Notwithſtanding theſe ſcandalous vices, if Paul of Samoſata had preſerved the purity of the orthodox faith, his reign over the capital of Syria would have ended only with his life; and had a ſeaſonable perſecution intervened, an effort of courage might perhaps have placed him in the rank of ſaints and martyrs. Some nice and ſubtle errors, which he imprudently adopted and obſtinately maintained, concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, excited the zeal and indignation of the eaſtern churches [129]. From Egypt to the Euxine ſea, the biſhops were in arms and in motion. Several councils were held, confutations were published, excommunications were pronounced, ambiguous explanations were by turns accepted and refuſed, treaties were concluded and violated, and at length Paul of Samoſata was degraded from his epiſcopal character, by the ſentence of ſeventy or eighty biſhops, who aſſembled for that purpoſe at Antioch, and who, without conſulting the rights of the clergy or people, appointed a ſucceſſor by their own authority. The manifeſt

CHAP. XVI.

irregularity of this proceeding increaſed the numbers of the diſcontented faction; and as Paul, who was no ſtranger to the arts of courts, had inſinuated himſelf into the favour of Zenobia, he maintained above four years the poſſeſſion of the epiſcopal houſe and office. The victory of Aurelian changed the face of the Eaſt, and the two contending parties, who applied to each other the epithets of ſchiſm and hereſy, were either commanded or permitted to plead their cauſe before the tribunal of the conqueror. This public and very ſingular trial affords a convincing proof, that the exiſtence, the property, the privileges, and the internal policy, of the Chriſtians were acknowledged, if not by the laws, at leaſt by the magiſtrates of the empire. As a Pagan and as a ſoldier, it could ſcarcely be expected that Aurelian ſhould enter into the diſcuſſion, whether the ſentiments of Paul or thoſe of his adverſaries were moſt agreeable to the true ſtandard of the orthodox faith. His determination, however, was founded on the general principles of equity and reaſon. He conſidered the bishops of Italy as the moſt impartial and reſpectable judges among the Chriſtians, and as ſoon as he was informed, that they had unanimously approved the ſentence of the council, he acquieſced in their opinion, and immediately gave orders that Paul ſhould be compelled to relinquish the temporal poſſeſſions belonging to an office, of which, in the judgment of his brethren, he had been regularly deprived. But while we applaud the juſtice, we ſhould not

The ſentence is executed by Aurelian. A. D. 274

overlook the policy, of Aurelian; who was deſirous of reſtoring and cementing the dependance of the provinces on the capital, by every means which could bind the intereſt or prejudices of any part of his ſubjects [110].

Peace and proſperity of the church under Diocletian. A. D. 284—303.

Amidſt the frequent revolutions of the empire, the Chriſtians ſtill flouriſhed in peace and proſperity; and notwithſtanding a celebrated æra of martyrs has been deduced from the acceſſion of Diocletian [111], the new ſyſtem of policy, introduced and maintained by the wiſdom of that prince, continued, during more than eighteen years, to breathe the mildeſt and moſt liberal ſpirit of religious toleration. The mind of Diocletian himſelf was leſs adapted indeed to ſpeculative inquiries, than to the active labours of war and government. His prudence rendered him averſe to any great innovation, and though his temper was not very ſuſceptible of zeal or enthuſiaſm, he always maintained an habitual regard for the ancient deities of the empire. But the leiſure of the two empreſſes, of his wife Priſca, and of Valeria his daughter, permitted them to liſten with more attention and reſpect to the truths of Chriſtianity, which in every age has acknowledged its important obligations to female devotion [112]. The principal eunuchs, Lucian [113] and Dorotheus, Gorgonius and Andrew, who attended the perſon, poſſeſſed the favour, and governed the houſehold, of Diocletian, protected by their powerful influence the faith which they had embraced. Their example was imitated by many of the moſt conſiderable

CHAP. XVI.

officers of the palace, who, in their reſpective ſtations, had the care of the Imperial ornaments, of the robes, of the furniture, of the jewels, and even of the private treaſury; and, though it might ſometimes be incumbent on them to accompany the emperor when he ſacrificed in the temple [114], they enjoyed, with their wives, their children, and their ſlaves, the free exerciſe of the Chriſtian religion. Diocletian and his colleagues frequently conferred the moſt important offices on thoſe perſons, who avowed their abhorrence for the worſhip of the gods, but who had diſplayed abilities proper for the ſervice of the ſtate. The biſhops held an honourable rank in their reſpective provinces, and were treated with diſtinction and reſpect, not only by the people, but by the magiſtrates themſelves. Almoſt in every city, the ancient churches were found inſufficient to contain the increaſing multitude of proſelites; and in their place more ſtately and capacious edifices were erected for the public worſhip of the faithful. The corruption of manners and principles, ſo forcibly lamented by Euſebius [115], may be conſidered, not only as a conſequence, but as a proof, of the liberty, which the Chriſtians enjoyed and abuſed under the reign of Diocletian. Proſperity had relaxed the nerves of diſcipline. Fraud, envy, and malice, prevailed in every congregation. The preſbyters aſpired to the epiſcopal office, which every day became an object more worthy of their ambition. The biſhops, who contended with each other for eccleſiaſtical pre-eminence, appeared by

their conduct to claim a ſecular and tyrannical power in the church; and the lively faith which ſtill diſtinguiſhed the Chriſtians from the Gentiles, was ſhewn much leſs in their lives, than in their controverſial writings.

Progreſs of zeal and ſuperſtition among the Pagans.

Notwithſtanding this ſeeming ſecurity, an attentive obſerver might diſcern ſome ſymptoms that threatened the church with a more violent perſecution than any which ſhe had yet endured. The zeal and rapid progreſs of the Chriſtians awakened the Polytheiſts from their ſupine indifference in the cauſe of thoſe deities, whom cuſtom and education had taught them to revere. The mutual provocations of a religious war, which had already continued above two hundred years, exaſperated the animoſity of the contending parties. The Pagans were incenſed at the raſhneſs of a recent and obſcure ſect, which preſumed to accuſe their countrymen of error, and to devote their anceſtors to eternal miſery. The habits of juſtifying the popular mythology againſt the invectives of an implacable enemy, produced in their minds ſome ſentiments of faith and reverence for a ſyſtem which they had been accuſtomed to conſider with the moſt careleſs levity. The ſupernatural powers aſſumed by the church inſpired at the ſame time terror and emulation. The followers of the eſtabliſhed religion intrenched themſelves behind a ſimilar fortification of prodigies; invented new modes of ſacrifice, of expiation, and of initiation [116]; attempted to revive the credit of their expiring oracles [117]; and liſtened with eager

CHAP. XVI.

credulity to every impoſtor, who flattered their prejudices by a tale of wonders [138]. Both parties ſeemed to acknowledge the truth of thoſe miracles which were claimed by their adverſaries; and while they were contented with aſcribing them to the arts of magic, and to the power of dæmons, they mutually concurred in reſtoring and eſtabliſhing the reign of ſuperſtition [139]. Philoſophy, her moſt dangerous enemy, was now converted into her moſt uſeful ally. The groves of the academy, the gardens of Epicurus, and even the portico of the Stoics, were almoſt deſerted, as ſo many different ſchools of ſcepticiſm or impiety [140]: and many among the Romans were deſirous that the writings of Cicero ſhould be condemned and ſuppreſſed by the authority of the ſenate [141]. The prevailing ſect of the new Platonicians judged it prudent to connect themſelves with the prieſts, whom perhaps they deſpiſed, againſt the Chriſtians, whom they had reaſon to fear. Theſe faſhionable philoſophers proſecuted the deſign of extracting allegorical wiſdom from the fictions of the Greek poets; inſtituted myſterious rites of devotion for the uſe of their choſen diſciples; recommended the worship of the ancient gods as the emblems or miniſters of the Supreme Deity, and compoſed againſt the faith of the goſpel many elaborate treatiſes [142], which have ſince been committed to the flames by the prudence of orthodox emperors [143].

Maximian and Galerius puniſh

Although the policy of Diocletian and the humanity of Conſtantius inclined them to preſerve

inviolate the maxims of toleration, it was ſoon diſcovered that their two aſſociates, Maximian and Galerius, entertained the moſt implacable averſion for the name and religion of the Chriſtians. The minds of thoſe princes had never been enlightened by ſcience; education had never ſoftened their temper. They owed their greatneſs to their ſwords, and in their moſt elevated fortune they ſtill retained their ſuperſtitious prejudices of ſoldiers and peaſants. In the general adminiſtration of the provinces they obeyed the laws which their benefactor had eſtabliſhed; but they frequently found occaſions of exerciſing within their camp and palaces a ſecret perſecution [144], for which the imprudent zeal of the Chriſtians ſometimes offered the moſt ſpecious pretences. A ſentence of death was executed upon Maximilianus, an African youth, who had been produced by his own father before the magiſtrate as a ſufficient and legal recruit, but who obſtinately perſiſted in declaring, that his conſcience would not permit him to embrace the profeſſion of a ſoldier [145]. It could ſcarcely be expected that any government ſhould ſuffer the action of Marcellus the Centurion to paſs with impunity. On the day of a public feſtival, that officer threw away his belt, his arms, and the enſigns of his office, and exclaimed with a loud voice, that he would obey none but Jeſus Chriſt the eternal King, and that he renounced for ever the uſe of carnal weapons, and the ſervice of an idolatrous maſter. The ſoldiers, as ſoon as they recovered from their aſtoniſhment,

CHAP. XVI. a few Chriſtian ſoldiers.

CHAP. XVI.

secured the person of Marcellus. He was examined in the city of Tingi by the president of that part of Mauritania; and as he was convicted by his own confession, he was condemned and beheaded for the crime of desertion [146]. Examples of such a nature savour much less of religious persecution than of martial or even civil law: but they served to alienate the mind of the emperors, to justify the severity of Galerius, who dismissed a great number of Christian officers from their employments; and to authorize the opinion, that a sect of enthusiasts, which avowed principles so repugnant to the public safety, must either remain useless, or would soon become dangerous, subjects of the empire.

Galerius prevails on Diocletian to begin a general persecution.

After the success of the Persian war had raised the hopes and the reputation of Galerius, he passed a winter with Diocletian in the palace of Nicomedia; and the fate of Christianity became the object of their secret consultations [147]. The experienced emperor was still inclined to pursue measures of lenity; and though he readily consented to exclude the Christians from holding any employments in the household or the army, he urged in the strongest terms the danger as well as cruelty of shedding the blood of those deluded fanatics. Galerius at length extorted from him the permission of summoning a council, composed of a few persons the most distinguished in the civil and military departments of the state. The important question was agitated in their presence, and those ambitious courtiers easily discerned, that it

was incumbent on them to ſecond, by their eloquence, the importunate violence of the Cæſar. It may be preſumed, that they inſiſted on every topic which might intereſt the pride, the piety, or the fears, of their ſovereign in the deſtruction of Chriſtianity. Perhaps they repreſented, that the glorious work of the deliverance of the empire was left imperfect, as long as an independent people was permitted to ſubſiſt and multiply in the heart of the provinces. The Chriſtians (it might ſpeciously be alleged), renouncing the gods and the inſtitutions of Rome, had conſtituted a diſtinct republic, which might yet be ſuppreſſed before it had acquired any military force: but which was already governed by its own laws and magiſtrates, was poſſeſſed of a public treaſure, and was intimately connected in all its parts, by the frequent aſſemblies of the bishops, to whoſe decrees their numerous and opulent congregations yielded an implicit obedience. Arguments like theſe, may ſeem to have determined the reluctant mind of Diocletian to embrace a new ſyſtem of perſecution: but though we may ſuſpect, it is not in our power to relate, the ſecret intrigues of the palace, the private views and reſentments, the jealouſy of women or eunuchs, and all thoſe trifling but deciſive cauſes which ſo often influence the fate of empires, and the counſels of the wiſeſt monarchs [14].

Demolition of the church of Nicomedia.

The pleaſure of the emperors was at length ſignified to the Chriſtians, who, during the courſe of this melancholy winter, had expected,

CHAP. XVI. A. D. 303. 23d Feb.

with anxiety, the result of so many secret consultations. The twenty-third of February, which coincided with the Roman festival of the Terminalia [149], was appointed (whether from accident or design) to set bounds to the progress of Christianity. At the earliest dawn of day, the Prætorian præfect [150], accompanied by several generals, tribunes, and officers of the revenue, repaired to the principal church of Nicomedia, which was situated on an eminence in the most populous and beautiful part of the city. The doors were instantly broke open; they rushed into the sanctuary; and as they searched in vain for some visible object of worship, they were obliged to content themselves with committing to the flames the volumes of holy scripture. The ministers of Diocletian were followed by a numerous body of guards and pioneers, who marched in order of battle, and were provided with all the instruments used in the destruction of fortified cities. By their incessant labour, a sacred edifice, which towered above the Imperial palace, and had long excited the indignation and envy of the Gentiles, was in a few hours levelled with the ground [151].

The first edict against the Christians. 24th of February.

The next day the general edict of persecution was published [152]; and though Diocletian, still averse to the effusion of blood, had moderated the fury of Galerius, who proposed, that every one refusing to offer sacrifice, should immediately be burnt alive, the penalties inflicted on the obstinacy of the Christians might be deemed sufficiently rigorous and effectual. It was enacted, that

their churches, in all the provinces of the empire, should be demolished to their foundations; and the punishment of death was denounced againſt all who should preſume to hold any ſecret aſſemblies for the purpoſe of religious worship. The philoſophers, who now aſſumed the unworthy office of directing the blind zeal of perſecution, had diligently ſtudied the nature and genius of the Chriſtian religion; and as they were not ignorant that the ſpeculative doctrines of the faith were ſuppoſed to be contained in the writings of the prophets, of the evangeliſts, and of the apoſtles, they moſt probably ſuggeſted the order, that the biſhops and presbyters should deliver all their ſacred books into the hands of the magiſtrates; who were commanded, under the ſevereſt penalties, to burn them in a public and ſolemn manner. By the ſame edict, the property of the church was at once confiſcated; and the ſeveral parts of which it might conſiſt, were either ſold to the higheſt bidder, united to the Imperial domain, beſtowed on the cities and corporations, or granted to the ſolicitations of rapacious courtiers. After taking ſuch effectual meaſures to abolish the worſhip, and to diſſolve the government, of the Chriſtians, it was thought neceſſary to ſubject to the moſt intolerable hardships the condition of thoſe perverſe individuals who should ſtill reject the religion of Nature, of Rome, and of their anceſtors. Perſons of a liberal birth were declared incapable of holding any honours or employments; ſlaves were for ever deprived of the hope

CHAP. XVI.

of freedom, and the whole body of the people were put out of the protection of the law. The judges were authorized to hear and to determine every action that was brought againſt a Chriſtian. But the Chriſtians were not permitted to complain of any injury which they themſelves had ſuffered; and thus thoſe unfortunate ſectaries were expoſed to the ſeverity, while they were excluded from the benefits, of public juſtice. This new ſpecies of martyrdom, ſo painful and lingering, ſo obſcure and ignominious, was, perhaps, the moſt proper to weary the conſtancy of the faithful: nor can it be doubted that the paſſions and intereſt of mankind were diſpoſed on this occaſion to ſecond the deſigns of the emperors. But the policy of a well-ordered government muſt ſometimes have interpoſed in behalf of the oppreſſed Chriſtians; nor was it poſſible for the Roman princes entirely to remove the apprehenſion of punishment, or to connive at every act of fraud and violence, without expoſing their own authority and the reſt of their ſubjects to the moſt alarming dangers [111].

Zeal and punishment of a Chriſtian.

This edict was ſcarcely exhibited to the public view, in the moſt conſpicuous place of Nicomedia, before it was torn down by the hands of a Chriſtian, who expreſſed, at the ſame time, by the bittereſt invectives, his contempt as well as abhorrence for ſuch impious and tyrannical governors. His offence, according to the mildeſt laws, amounted to treaſon, and deſerved death. And if it be true that he was a perſon of rank and education, thoſe circumſtances could ſerve only

only to aggravate his guilt. He was burnt, or rather roaſted, by a ſlow fire; and his executioners, zealous to revenge the perſonal inſult which had been offered to the emperors, exhauſted every refinement of cruelty, without being able to ſubdue his patience, or to alter the ſteady and inſulting ſmile which in his dying agonies he ſtill preſerved in his countenance. The Chriſtians, though they confeſſed that his conduct had not been ſtrictly conformable to the laws of prudence, admired the divine fervour of his zeal; and the exceſſive commendations which they lavished on the memory of their hero and martyr, contributed to fix a deep impreſſion of terror and hatred in the mind of Diocletian [154]. CHAP. XVI.

His fears were ſoon alarmed by the view of a danger from which he very narrowly eſcaped. Within fifteen days the palace of Nicomedia, and even the bedchamber of Diocletian, were twice in flames; and though both times they were extinguiſhed without any material damage, the ſingular repetition of the fire was juſtly conſidered as an evident proof that it had not been the effect of chance or negligence. The ſuſpicion naturally fell on the Chriſtians; and it was ſuggeſted, with ſome degree of probability, that thoſe deſperate fanatics, provoked by their preſent ſufferings, and apprehenſive of impending calamities, had entered into a conſpiracy with their faithful brethren, the eunuchs of the palace, againſt the lives of two emperors, whom they deteſted as the irreconcileable enemies of the church of God. Jealouſy and

Fire of the palace of Nicomedia imputed to the Chriſtians.

CHAP. XVI.

reſentment prevailed in every breaſt, but eſpecially in that of Diocletian. A great number of perſons, diſtinguiſhed either by the offices which they had filled, or by the favour which they had enjoyed, were thrown into priſon. Every mode of torture was put in practice, and the court, as well as city, was polluted with many bloody executions [155]. But as it was found impoſſible to extort any diſcovery of this myſterious tranſaction, it ſeems incumbent on us either to preſume the innocence, or to admire the reſolution, of the ſufferers. A few days afterwards Galerius haſtily withdrew himſelf from Nicomedia, declaring, that if he delayed his departure from that devoted palace, he ſhould fall a ſacrifice to the rage of the Chriſtians. The eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians, from whom alone we derive a partial and imperfect knowledge of this perſecution, are at a loſs how to account for the fears and dangers of the emperors. Two of theſe writers, a Prince and a Rhetorician, were eye-witneſſes of the fire of Nicomedia. The one aſcribes it to lightning, and the divine wrath; the other affirms, that it was kindled by the malice of Galerius himſelf [156].

Execution of the firſt edict.

As the edict againſt the Chriſtians was deſigned for a general law of the whole empire, and as Diocletian and Galerius, though they might not wait for the conſent, were aſſured of the concurrence, of the weſtern princes, it would appear more conſonant to our ideas of policy, that the governors of all the provinces ſhould have received ſecret inſtructions to publish, on one and the ſame

day, this declaration of war within their reſpective departments. It was at leaſt to be expected, that the convenience of the public highways and eſtabliſhed poſts would have enabled the emperors to tranſmit their orders with the utmoſt diſpatch from the palace of Nicomedia to the extremities of the Roman world; and that they would not have ſuffered fifty days to elapſe, before the edict was published in Syria, and near four months before it was ſignified to the cities of Africa [117]. This delay may perhaps be imputed to the cautious temper of Diocletian, who had yielded a reluctant conſent to the meaſures of perſecution, and who was deſirous of trying the experiment under his more immediate eye, before he gave way to the diſorders and diſcontent which it muſt inevitably occaſion in the diſtant provinces. At firſt, indeed, the magiſtrates were reſtrained from the effuſion of blood; but the uſe of every other ſeverity was permitted and even recommended to their zeal; nor could the Chriſtians, though they cheerfully reſigned the ornaments of their churches, reſolve to interrupt their religious aſſemblies, or to deliver their ſacred books to the flames. The pious obſtinacy of Felix, an African biſhop, appears to have embarraſſed the ſubordinate miniſters of the government. The curator of his city ſent him in chains to the proconſul. The proconſul tranſmitted him to the Prætorian præfect of Italy; and Felix, who diſdained even to give an evaſive anſwer, was at length beheaded at Venuſia, in Lucania, a place on which the birth of Horace has conferred

CHAP. XVI.

CHAP. XVI.

fame [111]. This precedent, and perhaps ſome Imperial reſcript, which was iſſued in conſequence of it, appeared to authorize the governors of provinces, in punishing with death the refuſal of the Chriſtians to deliver up their ſacred books. There were undoubtedly many perſons who embraced this opportunity of obtaining the crown of martyrdom; but there were likewiſe too many who purchaſed an ignominious life, by diſcovering and betraying the holy ſcripture into the hands of infidels. A great number even of bishops and presbyters acquired, by this criminal compliance, the opprobrious epithet of *Traditors*; and their offence was productive of much preſent ſcandal, and of much future diſcord, in the African Church [112].

Demolition of the churches.

The copies, as well as the verſions of ſcripture, were already ſo multiplied in the empire, that the moſt ſevere inquiſition could no longer be attended with any fatal conſequences; and even the ſacrifice of thoſe volumes, which, in every congregation, were preſerved for public uſe, required the conſent of ſome treacherous and unworthy Chriſtians. But the ruin of the churches was eaſily effected by the authority of the government, and by the labour of the Pagans. In ſome provinces, however, the magiſtrates contented themſelves with ſhutting up the places of religious worship. In others, they more literally complied with the terms of the edict; and after taking away the doors, the benches, and the pulpit, which they burnt, as it were in a funeral pile, they completely

demolished the remainder of the edifice [160]. It is perhaps to this melancholy occaſion, that we should apply a very remarkable ſtory, which is related with ſo many circumſtances of variety and improbability, that it ſerves rather to excite than to ſatisfy our curioſity. In a ſmall town in Phrygia, of whoſe name as well as ſituation we are left ignorant, it ſhould ſeem, that the magiſtrates and the body of the people had embraced the Chriſtian faith; and as ſome reſiſtance might be apprehended to the execution of the edict, the governor of the province was ſupported by a numerous detachment of legionaries. On their approach the citizens threw themſelves into the church, with the reſolution either of defending by arms that ſacred edifice, or of periſhing in its ruins. They indignantly rejected the notice and permiſſion which was given them, to retire, till the ſoldiers, provoked by their obſtinate refuſal, ſet fire to the building on all ſides, and conſumed, by this extraordinary kind of martyrdom, a great number of Phrygians, with their wives and children [161]. CHAP. XVI.

Some ſlight diſturbances, though they were ſuppreſſed almoſt as ſoon as excited, in Syria and the frontiers of Armenia, afforded the enemies of the church a very plauſible occaſion to inſinuate, that thoſe troubles had been ſecretly fomented by the intrigues of the biſhops, who had already forgotten their oſtentatious profeſſions of paſſive and unlimited obedience [162]. The reſentment, or the fears, of Diocletian, at length tranſported Subſequent edicts.

CHAP. XVI.

him beyond the bounds of moderation, which he had hitherto preſerved, and he declared, in a ſeries of cruel edicts, his intention of abolishing the Chriſtian name. By the firſt of theſe edicts, the governors of the provinces were directed to apprehend all perſons of the eccleſiaſtical order; and the priſons, deſtined for the vileſt criminals, were ſoon filled with a multitude of bishops, presbyters, deacons, readers, and exorciſts. By a ſecond edict, the magiſtrates were commanded to employ every method of ſeverity, which might reclaim them from their odious ſuperſtition, and oblige them to return to the eſtabliſhed worship of the gods. This rigorous order was extended, by a ſubſequent edict, to the whole body of Chriſtians, who were expoſed to a violent and general perſecution [163]. Inſtead of thoſe ſalutary reſtraints, which had required the direct and ſolemn teſtimony of an accuſer, it became the duty as well as the intereſt of the Imperial officers, to diſcover, to purſue, and to torment, the moſt obnoxious among the faithful. Heavy penalties were denounced againſt all who ſhould preſume to ſave a proſcribed ſectary from the juſt indignation of the gods, and of the emperors. Yet, notwithſtanding the ſeverity of this law, the virtuous courage of many of the Pagans, in concealing their friends or relations, affords an honourable proof, that the rage of ſuperſtition had not extinguished in their minds the ſentiments of nature and humanity [164].

CHAP. XVI.

General idea of the perſecution.

Diocletian had no ſooner published his edicts againſt the Chriſtians, than, as if he had been deſirous of committing to other hands the work of perſecution, he diveſted himſelf of the Imperial purple. The character and ſituation of his colleagues and ſucceſſors ſometimes urged them to enforce, and ſometimes inclined them to ſuſpend, the execution of theſe rigorous laws; nor can we acquire a juſt and diſtinct idea of this important period of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, unleſs we ſeparately conſider the ſtate of Chriſtianity, in the different parts of the empire, during the ſpace of ten years, which elapſed between the firſt edicts of Diocletian, and the final peace of the church.

In the weſtern provinces under Conſtantius and Conſtantine;

The mild and humane temper of Conſtantius was averſe to the oppreſſion of any part of his ſubjects. The principal offices of his palace were exerciſed by Chriſtians. He loved their perſons, eſteemed their fidelity, and entertained not any dislike to their religious principles. But as long as Conſtantius remained in the ſubordinate ſtation of Cæſar, it was not in his power openly to reject the edicts of Diocletian, or to diſobey the commands of Maximian. His authority contributed, however, to alleviate the ſufferings which he pitied and abhorred. He conſented, with reluctance, to the ruin of the churches; but he ventured to protect the Chriſtians themſelves from the fury of the populace, and from the rigour of the laws. The provinces of Gaul (under which we may probably include thoſe of Britain) were indebted for the ſingular tranquillity which they

CHAP. XVI.

enjoyed, to the gentle interpoſition of their ſovereign [165]. But Datianus, the preſident or governor of Spain, actuated either by zeal or policy, choſe rather to execute the public edicts of the emperors, than to underſtand the ſecret intentions of Conſtantius; and it can ſcarcely be doubted, that his provincial adminiſtration was ſtained with the blood of a few martyrs [166]. The elevation of Conſtantius to the ſupreme and independent dignity of Auguſtus, gave a free ſcope to the exerciſe of his virtues, and the ſhortneſs of his reign did not prevent him from eſtabliſhing a ſyſtem of toleration, of which he left the precept and the example to his ſon Conſtantine. His fortunate ſon, from the firſt moment of his acceſſion, declaring himſelf the protector of the church, at length deſerved the appellation of the firſt emperor, who publicly profeſſed and eſtabliſhed the Chriſtian religion. The motives of his converſion, as they may variouſly be deduced from benevolence, from policy, from conviction, or from remorſe; and the progreſs of the revolution, which, under his powerful influence, and that of his ſons, rendered Chriſtianity the reigning religion of the Roman empire, will form a very intereſting and important chapter in the third volume of this hiſtory. At preſent it may be ſufficient to obſerve, that every victory of Conſtantine was productive of ſome relief or benefit to the church.

In Italy and Africa, under Maximian and Severus;

The provinces of Italy and Africa experienced a ſhort but violent perſecution. The rigorous edicts of Diocletian were ſtrictly and cheerfully executed

by his aſſociate Maximian, who had long hated the Chriſtians, and who delighted in acts of blood and violence. In the autumn of the firſt year of the perſecution, the two emperors met at Rome to celebrate their triumph; ſeveral oppreſſive laws appear to have iſſued from their ſecret conſultations, and the diligence of the magiſtrates was animated by the preſence of their ſovereigns. After Diocletian had diveſted himſelf of the purple, Italy and Africa were adminiſtered under the name of Severus, and were, expoſed, without defence, to the implacable reſentment of his maſter Galerius. Among the martyrs of Rome, Adauctus deſerves the notice of poſterity. He was of a noble family in Italy, and had raiſed himſelf, through the ſucceſſive honours of the palace, to the important office of treaſurer of the private demeſnes. Adauctus is the more remarkable for being the only perſon of rank and diſtinction who appears to have ſuffered death, during the whole courſe of this general perſecution [167]. CHAP. XVI.

The revolt of Maxentius immediately reſtored peace to the churches of Italy and Africa; and the ſame tyrant who oppreſſed every other claſs of his ſubjects, ſhewed himſelf juſt, humane, and even partial, towards the afflicted Chriſtians. He depended on their gratitude and affection, and very naturally preſumed, that the injuries which they had ſuffered, and the dangers which they ſtill apprehended from his moſt inveterate enemy, would ſecure the fidelity of a party already conſiderable by their numbers and opulence [168]. Even under Maxentius;

CHAP. XVI.

the conduct of Maxentius towards the bishops of Rome and Carthage, may be considered as the proof of his toleration, since it is probable that the most orthodox princes would adopt the same measures with regard to their established clergy. Marcellus, the former of those prelates, had thrown the capital into confusion, by the severe penance which he imposed on a great number of Christians, who, during the late persecution, had renounced or dissembled their religion. The rage of faction broke out in frequent and violent seditions; the blood of the faithful was shed by each other's hands, and the exile of Marcellus, whose prudence seems to have been less eminent than his zeal, was found to be the only measure capable of restoring peace to the distracted church of Rome [176]. The behaviour of Mensurius, bishop of Carthage, appears to have been still more reprehensible. A deacon of that city had published a libel against the emperor. The offender took refuge in the episcopal palace; and though it was somewhat early to advance any claims of ecclesiastical immunities, the bishop refused to deliver him up to the officers of justice. For this treasonable resistance, Mensurius was summoned to court, and instead of receiving a legal sentence of death or banishment, he was permitted, after a short examination, to return to his diocese [177]. Such was the happy condition of the Christian subjects of Maxentius, that whenever they were desirous of procuring for their own use any bodies of martyrs, they were obliged to purchase them from the most distant

provinces of the East. A story is related of Aglae, a Roman lady, descended from a consular family, and possessed of so ample an estate, that it required the management of seventy-three stewards. Among these, Boniface was the favourite of his mistress; and as Aglae mixed love with devotion, it is reported that he was admitted to share her bed. Her fortune enabled her to gratify the pious desire of obtaining some sacred relics from the East. She intrusted Boniface with a considerable sum of gold, and a large quantity of aromatics; and her lover, attended by twelve horsemen and three covered chariots, undertook a remote pilgrimage, as far as Tarsus in Cilicia [171]. CHAP. XVI.

The sanguinary temper of Galerius, the first and principal author of the persecution, was formidable to those Christians, whom their misfortunes had placed within the limits of his dominions; and it may fairly be presumed, that many persons of a middle rank, who were not confined by the chains either of wealth or of poverty, very frequently deserted their native country, and sought a refuge in the milder climate of the West. As long as he commanded only the armies and provinces of Illyricum, he could with difficulty either find or make a considerable number of martyrs, in a warlike country, which had entertained the missionaries of the gospel with more coldness and reluctance than any other part of the empire [172]. But when Galerius had obtained the supreme power and the government of the East, he indulged in their fullest extent his zeal and cruelty, not only

in Illyricum and the East, under Galerius and Maximian.

CHAP. XVI.

in the provinces of Thrace, and Aſia, which acknowledged his immediate juriſdiction; but in thoſe of Syria, Paleſtine, and Egypt, where Maximin gratified his own inclination, by yielding a rigorous obedience to the ſtern commands of his benefactor [171]. The frequent diſappointments of his ambitious views, the experience of ſix years of perſecution, and the ſalutary reflections which a lingering and painful diſtemper ſuggeſted to the mind of Galerius, at length convinced him that the moſt violent efforts of deſpotiſm are inſufficient to extirpate a whole people, or to ſubdue their religious prejudices. Deſirous of repairing the miſchief that he had occaſioned, he published in his own name, and in thoſe of Licinius and Conſtantine, a general edict, which, after a pompous recital of the Imperial titles, proceeded in the following manner:

Galerius publiſhes an edict of toleration.

„ Among the important cares which have occupied our mind for the utility and preſervation „ of the empire, it was our intention to correct „ and re-eſtabliſh all things according to the ancient laws and public diſcipline of the Romans. „ We were particularly deſirous of reclaiming, „ into the way of reaſon and nature, the deluded „ Chriſtians, who had renounced the religion and „ ceremonies inſtituted by their fathers; and preſumptuously deſpiſing the practice of antiquity, „ had invented extravagant laws and opinions „ according to the dictates of their fancy, and „ had collected a various ſociety from the different provinces of our empire. The edicts which

„ we have published to enforce the worship of CHAP. XVI.
„ the gods, having expoſed many of the Chriſtians
„ to danger and diſtreſs, many having ſuffered
„ death, and many more, who ſtill perſiſt in their
„ impious folly, being left deſtitute of *any* public
„ exerciſe of religion, we are diſpoſed to extend
„ to thoſe unhappy men the effects of our wonted
„ clemency. We permit them therefore freely to
„ profeſs their private opinions, and to aſſemble
„ in their conventicles without fear or moleſta-
„ tion, provided always that they preſerve a due
„ reſpect to the eſtabliſhed laws and government.
„ By another reſcript we ſhall ſignify our inten-
„ tions to the judges and magiſtrates; and we
„ hope that our indulgence will engage the Chriſ-
„ tians to offer up their prayers to the deity
„ whom they adore, for our ſafety and proſperity,
„ for their own, and for that of the republic [174]."
It is not uſually in the language of edicts and manifeſtos, that we ſhould ſearch for the real character or the ſecret motives of princes; but as theſe were the words of a dying emperor, his ſituation, perhaps, may be admitted as a pledge of his ſincerity.

When Galerius ſubſcribed this edict of toleration, he was well aſſured that Licinius would readily comply with the inclinations of his friend and benefactor, and that any meaſures in favour of the Chriſtians, would obtain the approbation of Conſtantine. But the emperor would not venture to inſert in the preamble the name of Maximin, whoſe conſent was of the greateſt importance, Peace of the church.

CHAP. XVI.

and who ſucceeded a few days afterwards to the provinces of Aſia. In the firſt ſix months, however, of his new reign, Maximin affected to adopt the prudent counſels of his predeceſſor; and though he never condeſcended to ſecure the tranquillity of the church by a public edict, Sabinus, his Prætorian præfect, addreſſed a circular letter to all the governors and magiſtrates of the provinces, expatiating on the Imperial clemency, acknowledging the invincible obſtinacy of the Chriſtians, and directing the officers of juſtice to ceaſe their ineffectual proſecutions, and to connive at the ſecret aſſemblies of thoſe enthuſiaſts. In conſequence of theſe orders, great numbers of Chriſtians were releaſed from priſon, or delivered from the mines. The confeſſors, ſinging hymns of triumph, returned into their own countries; and thoſe who had yielded to the violence of the tempeſt, ſolicited with tears of repentance their re-admiſſion into the boſom of the church [175].

Maximin prepares to renew the perſecution.

But this treacherous calm was of ſhort duration, nor could the Chriſtians of the Eaſt place any confidence in the character of their ſovereign. Cruelty and ſuperſtition were the ruling paſſions of the ſoul of Maximin. The former ſuggeſted the means, the latter pointed out the objects, of perſecution. The emperor was devoted to the worſhip of the gods, to the ſtudy of magic, and to the belief of oracles. The prophets or philoſophers, whom he revered as the favourites of heaven, were frequently raiſed to the government of provinces, and admitted into his moſt ſecret coun-

cils. They eaſily convinced him, that the Chriſtians had been indebted for their victories to their regular diſcipline, and that the weakneſs of polytheiſm had principally flowed from a want of union and ſubordination among the miniſters of religion. A ſyſtem of government was therefore inſtituted, which was evidently copied from the policy of the church. In all the great cities of the empire, the temples were repaired and beautified by the order of Maximin; and the officiating prieſts of the various deities were ſubjected to the authority of a ſuperior pontiff, deſtined to oppoſe the biſhop, and to promote the cauſe of paganiſm. Theſe pontiffs acknowledged, in their turn, the ſupreme juriſdiction of the metropolitans or high-prieſts of the province, who acted as the immediate vicegerents of the emperor himſelf. A white robe was the enſign of their dignity; and theſe new prelates were carefully ſelected from the moſt noble and opulent families. By the influence of the magiſtrates, and of the ſacerdotal order, a great number of dutiful addreſſes were obtained, particularly from the cities of Nicomedia, Antioch, and Tyre, which artfully repreſented the well-known intentions of the court as the general ſenſe of the people; ſolicited the emperor to conſult the laws of juſtice rather than the dictates of his clemency; expreſſed their abhorrence of the Chriſtians, and humbly prayed that thoſe impious ſectaries might at leaſt be excluded from the limits of their reſpective territories. The anſwer of Maximin to the addreſs which he obtained from the citizens of

CHAP. XVI.

CHAP. XVI.

Tyre is ſtill extant. He praiſes their zeal and devotion in terms of the higheſt ſatisfaction, deſcants on the obſtinate impiety of the Chriſtians, and betrays, by the readineſs with which he conſents to their banishment, that he conſidered himſelf as receiving, rather than as conferring, an obligation. The prieſts as well as the magiſtrates were empowered to enforce the execution of his edicts, which were engraved on tables of braſs; and though it was recommended to them to avoid the effuſion of blood, the moſt cruel and ignominious punishments were inflicted on the refractory Chriſtians [176].

End of the perſecutions.

The Aſiatic Chriſtians had every thing to dread from the ſeverity of a bigotted monarch, who prepared his meaſures of violence with ſuch deliberate policy. But a few months had ſcarcely elapſed, before the edicts published by the two weſtern emperors obliged Maximin to ſuſpend the proſecution of his deſigns: the civil war which he ſo raſhly undertook againſt Licinius employed all his attention; and the defeat and death of Maximin ſoon delivered the church from the laſt and moſt implacable of her enemies [177].

Probable account of the ſufferings of the martyrs and confeſſors.

In this general view of the perſecution, which was firſt authorized by the edicts of Diocletian, I have purpoſely refrained from deſcribing the particular ſufferings and deaths of the Chriſtian martyrs. It would have been an eaſy task, from the hiſtory of Euſebius, from the declamations of Lactantius, and from the moſt ancient acts, to collect a long ſeries of horrid and diſguſtful pictures,

res, and to fill many pages with racks and scourges, with iron hooks, and red hot beds, and with all the variety of tortures which fire and steel, savage beasts and more savage executioners, could inflict on the human body. These melancholy scenes might be enlivened by a crowd of visions and miracles destined either to delay the death, to celebrate the triumph, or to discover the relics, of those canonized saints who suffered for the name of Christ. But I cannot determine what I ought to transcribe, till I am satisfied how much I ought to believe. The gravest of the ecclesiastical historians, Eusebius himself, indirectly confesses, that he has related whatever might redound to the glory, and that he has suppressed all that could tend to the disgrace, of religion [176]. Such an acknowledgment will naturally excite a suspicion that a writer who has so openly violated one of the fundamental laws of history, has not paid a very strict regard to the observance of the other: and the suspicion will derive additional credit from the character of Eusebius, which was less tinctured with credulity, and more practised in the arts of courts, than that of almost any of his contemporaries. On some particular occasions, when the magistrates were exasperated by some personal motives of interest or resentment, when the zeal of the martyrs urged them to forget the rules of prudence, and perhaps of decency, to overturn the altars, to pour out imprecations against the emperors, or to strike the judge as he sat on his tribunal, it may be presumed that every mode

CHAP. XVI.

CHAP. XVI.

of torture, which cruelty could invent or conſtancy could endure, was exhauſted on thoſe devoted victims [170]. Two circumſtances, however, have been unwarily mentioned, which inſinuate that the general treatment of the Chriſtians, who had been apprehended by the officers of juſtice, was leſs intolerable than it is uſually imagined to have been. 1. The confeſſors who were condemned to work in the mines, were permitted, by the humanity or the negligence of their keepers, to build chapels, and freely to profeſs their religion in the midſt of thoſe dreary habitations [171]. 2. The biſhops were obliged to check and to cenſure the forward zeal of the Chriſtians, who voluntarily threw themſelves into the hands of the magiſtrates. Some of theſe were perſons oppreſſed by poverty and debts, who blindly ſought to terminate a miſerable exiſtence by a glorious death. Others were allured by the hope, that a ſhort confinement would expiate the ſins of a whole life; and others again were actuated by the leſs honourable motive of deriving a plentiful ſubſiſtence, and perhaps a conſiderable profit, from the alms which the charity of the faithful beſtowed on the priſoners [172]. After the church had triumphed over all her enemies, the intereſt as well as vanity of the captives prompted them to magnify the merit of their reſpective ſuffering. A convenient diſtance of time or place gave an ample ſcope to the progreſs of fiction; and the frequent inſtances which might be alleged of holy martyrs, whoſe wounds had been inſtantly healed, whoſe ſtrength had been renewed,

and whoſe loſt members had miraculously been reſtored, were extremely convenient for the purpoſe of removing every difficulty, and of ſilencing every objection. The moſt extravagant legends, as they conduced to the honour of the church, were applauded by the credulous multitude, countenanced by the power of the clergy, and atteſted by the ſuſpicious evidence of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory. CHAP. XVI.

The vague deſcriptions of exile and impriſonment, of pain and torture, are ſo eaſily exaggerated or ſoftened by the pencil of an artful orator, that we are naturally induced to inquire into a fact of a more diſtinct and ſtubborn kind; the number of perſons who ſuffered death in conſequence of the edicts published by Diocletian, his aſſociates, and his ſucceſſors. The recent legendaries record whole armies and cities, which were at once ſwept away by the undiſtinguiſhing rage of perſecution. The more ancient writers content themſelves with pouring out a liberal effuſion of looſe and tragical invectives, without condeſcending to aſcertain the preciſe number of thoſe perſons who were permitted to ſeal with their blood their belief of the goſpel. From the hiſtory of Euſebius, it may however be collected, that only nine biſhops were puniſhed with death; and we are aſſured, by his particular enumeration of the martyrs of Paleſtine, that no more than ninety-two Chriſtians were entitled to that honourable appellation [182]. As we are unacquainted with the degree of epiſcopal zeal and courage which prevailed at Number of martyrs.

CHAP. XVI.

that time, it is not in our power to draw any useful inferences from the former of these facts: but the latter may serve to justify a very important and probable conclusion. According to the distribution of Roman provinces, Palestine may be considered as the sixteenth part of the Eastern empire [183]; and since there were some governors, who from a real or affected clemency had preserved their hands unstained with the blood of the faithful [184], it is reasonable to believe, that the country which had given birth to Christianity produced at least the sixteenth part of the martyrs who suffered death within the dominions of Galerius and Maximin; the whole might consequently amount to about fifteen hundred, a number which, if it is equally divided between the ten years of the persecution, will allow an annual consumption of one hundred and fifty martyrs. Allotting the same proportion to the provinces of Italy, Africa, and perhaps Spain, where, at the end of two or three years, the rigour of the penal laws was either suspended or abolished, the multitude of Christians in the Roman empire, on whom a capital punishment was inflicted by a judicial sentence, will be reduced to somewhat less than two thousand persons. Since it cannot be doubted that the Christians were more numerous, and their enemies more exasperated, in the time of Diocletian than they had ever been in any former persecution, this probable and moderate computation may teach us to estimate the number of primitive saints and martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the impor-

tant purpoſe of introducing Chriſtianity into the world. CHAP. XVI.

We ſhall conclude this chapter by a melancholy truth, which obtrudes itſelf on the reluctant mind; that even admitting, without heſitation or enquiry, all that hiſtory has recorded, or devotion has feigned, on the ſubject of martyrdoms, it muſt ſtill be acknowledged, that the Chriſtians, in the courſe of their inteſtine diſſenſions, have inflicted far greater ſeverities on each other, than they had experienced from the zeal of infidels. During the ages of ignorance which followed the ſubverſion of the Roman empire in the Weſt, the biſhops of the Imperial city extended their dominion over the laity as well as clergy of the Latin church. The fabric of ſuperſtition which they had erected, and which might long have defied the feeble efforts of reaſon, was at length aſſaulted by a crowd of daring fanatics, who, from the twelfth to the ſixteenth century, aſſumed the popular character of reformers. The church of Rome defended by violence the empire which ſhe had acquired by fraud; a ſyſtem of peace and benevolence was ſoon diſgraced by proſcriptions, wars, maſſacres, and the inſtitution of the holy office. And as the reformers were animated by the love of civil, as well as of religious freedom, the Catholic princes connected their own intereſt with that of the clergy, and enforced by fire and the ſword the terrors of ſpiritual cenſures. In the Netherlands alone, more than one hundred thouſand of the ſubjects of Charles the Fifth are ſaid to have Conclusion.

CHAP. XVI.

ſuffered by the hand of the executioner; and this extraordinary number is atteſted by Grotius [185], a man of genius and learning, who preſerved his moderation amidſt the fury of contending ſects, and who compoſed the annals of his own age and country, at a time when the invention of printing had facilitated the means of intelligence, and increaſed the danger of detection. If we are obliged to ſubmit our belief to the authority of Grotius, it muſt be allowed, that the number of Proteſtants, who were executed in a ſingle province and a ſingle reign, far exceeded that of the primitive martyrs in the ſpace of three centuries, and of the Roman empire. But if the improbability of the fact itſelf ſhould prevail over the weight of evidence; if Grotius ſhould be convicted of exaggerating the merit and ſufferings of the reformers [186]; we ſhall be naturally led to inquire, what confidence can be placed in the doubtful and imperfect monuments of ancient credulity; what degree of credit can be aſſigned to a courtly biſhop, and a paſſionate declaimer, who, under the protection of Conſtantine, enjoyed the excluſive privilege of recording the perſecutions inflicted on the Chriſtians by the vanquiſhed rivals or diſregarded predeceſſors of their gracious ſovereign.

NOTES

NOTES

TO THE

SECOND VOLUME.

CHAP. XI.

[1] *Pons Aureoli*, thirteen miles from Bergamo, and thirty-two from Milan. See Cluver. Italia Antiq. tom. i. p. 245. Near this place, in the year 1703, the obſtinate battle of Caſſano was fought between the French and Auſtrians. The excellent relation of the Chevalier de Folard, who was preſent, gives a very diſtinct idea of the ground. See Polybe de Folard, tom. iii. p. 223—248.

[2] On the death of Gallienus, ſee Trebellius Pollio in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 181. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 37. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 634. Eutrop. ix. 11. Aurelius Victor in Epitom. Victor in Cæſar. I have compared and blended them all, but have chiefly followed Aurelius Victor, who ſeems to have had the beſt memoirs.

[3] Some ſuppoſed him, oddly enough, to be a baſtard of the younger Gordian. Others took advantage of the province of Dardania, to deduce his origin from Dardanus, and the ancient kings of Troy.

[4] *Notoria*, a periodical and official diſpatch which the Emperors received from the *frumentarii*, or agents diſperſed through the provinces. Of theſe we may ſpeak hereafter.

[5] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 208. Gallienus deſcribes the plate, veſtments, etc. like a man who loved and underſtood thoſe ſplendid trifles.

[6] Julian (Orat. i. p. 6.) affirms that Claudius acquired the empire in a juſt and even holy manner. But we may diſtruſt the partiality of a kinſman.

[7] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 203. There are ſome trifling differences concerning the circumſtances of the laſt defeat and death of Aureolus.

[8] Aurelius Victor in Gallien. The people loudly prayed for the damnation of Gallienus. The ſenate decreed that his relations and ſervants ſhould be thrown down headlong from the Gemonian ſtairs. An obnoxious officer of the revenue had his eyes torn out whilſt under examination.

[9] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 137.

[10] Zonaras on this occaſion mentions Poſthumus; but the regiſters of the ſenate (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 203.) prove that Tetricus was already emperor of the weſtern provinces.

[11] The Auguſtan Hiſtory mentions the ſmaller, Zonaras the larger, number; the lively fancy of Monteſquieu induced him to prefer the latter.

[12] Trebell. Pollio in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 204.

[13] Hiſt. Auguſt. in Claud. Aurelian. et Prob. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 38—42. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 638. Aurel. Victor in Epitom. Victor Junior in Cæſar. Eutrop. ix. 11. Euſeb. in Chron.

[14] According to Zonaras (l. xii. p. 638.), Claudius, before his death, inveſted him with the purple; but this ſingular fact is rather contradicted than confirmed by other writers.

[15] See the life of Claudius by Pollio, and the orations of Mamertinus, Eumenius, and Julian. See likewiſe the Cæſars of Julian, p. 313. In Julian it was not adulation, but ſuperſtition and vanity.

[16] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 42. Pollio (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 207.) allows him virtues, and ſays, that like Pertinax he was killed by the licentious ſoldiers. According to Dexippus, he died of a diſeaſe.

[17] Theoclius (as quoted in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 211.) affirms, that in one day he killed, with his own hand, forty-eight Sarmatians, and in ſeveral ſubſequent engagements nine hundred and fifty. This heroic valour was admired by the ſoldiers, and celebrated in their rude ſongs, the burden of which was *mille, mille, mille occidit.*

[18] Acholius (ap. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 213.) deſcribes the ceremony of the adoption, as it was performed at Byzantium, in the preſence of the emperor and his great officers.

[19] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 211. This laconic epiſtle is truly the work of a ſoldier; it abounds with military phraſes and words, ſome of which cannot be underſtood without difficulty. *Ferramenta ſamiata* is well explained by Salmaſius. The former of the words means all weapons of offence, and is contraſted with *Arma*, defenſive armour. The latter ſignifies keen and well ſharpened.

[20] Zoſim. l. i. p. 45.

[21] Dexippus (ap. Excerpta Legat. p. 12.) relates the whole tranſaction under the name of Vandals. Aurelian married one of the Gothic ladies to his general Bonoſus, who was able to drink with the Goths and diſcover their ſecrets. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 247.

[22] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 222. Eutrop. ix. 15. Sextus Rufus, c. 9. Lactantius de mortibus Perſecutorum, c. 9.

[23] The Walachians ſtill preſerve many traces of the Latin language, and have boaſted, in every age, of their Roman deſcent. They are ſurrounded by, but not mixed with, the barbarians. See a Memoir of M. d'Anville on ancient Dacia, in the Academy of Inſcriptions, tom. xxx.

[24] See the firſt chapter of Jornandes. The Vandals however (c. 22.) maintained a short independence between the rivers Mariſia and Criſſia (Maros and Keres) which fell into the Teiſs.

[25] Dexippus, p. 7—12. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 43. Vopiſcus in Aurelian. in Hiſt. Auguſt. However theſe hiſtorians differ in names (Alemanni, Juthungi, and Marcomanni), it is evident that they mean the ſame people, and the ſame war; but it requires ſome care to conciliate and explain them.

[26] Cantoclarus, with his uſual accuracy, chuſes to tranſlate three hundred thouſand: his verſion is equally repugnant to ſenſe and to grammar.

[27] We may remark, as an inſtance of bad taſte, that Dexippus applies to the light infantry of the Alemanni the technical terms proper only to the Grecian phalanx.

[28] In Dexippus, we at preſent read Rhodanus; M. de Valois very judiciously alters the word to Eridanus.

[29] The emperor Claudius was certainly of the number; but we are ignorant how far this mark of reſpect was extended; if to Cæſar and Auguſtus, it muſt have produced a very awful ſpectacle; a long line of the maſters of the world.

[30] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 210.

[31] Dexippus gives them a ſubtle and prolix oration, worthy of a Grecian ſophiſt.

[32] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 215.

[33] Dexippus, p. 12.

[34] Victor Junior, in Aurelian.

[35] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 216.

[36] The little river or rather torrent of Metaurus near Fano, has been immortalized, by finding ſuch an hiſtorian as Livy, and ſuch a poet as Horace.

[37] It is recorded by an inſcription found at Pezaro. See Gruter, cclxxvi. 3.

[38] One ſhould imagine, he ſaid, that you were aſſembled in a Chriſtian church, not in the temple of all the gods.

[39] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 215, 216. gives a long account of theſe ceremonies, from the Regiſters of the ſenate.

[40] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. iii. 5. To confirm our idea, we may obſerve, that for a long time Mount Cælius was a grove of oaks, and Mount Viminal was over-run with oſiers; that, in the fourth century, the Aventine was a vacant and ſolitary retirement; that, till the time of Auguſtus, the Eſquiline was an unwholeſome burying-ground; and that the numerous inequalities, remarked by the ancients in the Quirinal, ſufficiently prove that it was not covered with buildings. Of the ſeven hills, the Capitoline and Palatine only, with the adjacent vallies, were the primitive habitation of the Roman people. But this ſubject would require a diſſertation.

[41] Exſpatiantia tecta multas addidere urbes, is the expreſſion of Pliny.

[42] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 222. Both Lipſius and Iſaac Voſſius have eagerly embraced this meaſure.

[43] See Nardini, Roma Antica, l. i. c. 8.

[44] Tacit. Hiſt. iv. 23.

[45] For Aurelian's walls, ſee Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 216. 222. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 43. Eutropius, ix. 15. Aurel. Victor in Aurelian. Victor Junior in Aurelian. Euſeb. Hieronym. et Idatius in Chronic.

[46] His competitor was Lollianus, or Ælianus, if indeed theſe names mean the ſame perſon. See Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 1177.

[47] The character of this prince by Julius Aterianus (ap. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 187.) is worth tranſcribing, as it ſeems fair and impartial. Victorino qui poſt Junium Poſthumium Gallias rexit neminem exiſtimo præferendum; non in virtute Trajanum; non Antoninum in clementia; non in gravitate Nervam; non in gubernando ærario Veſpaſianum; non in Cenſura totius vitæ ac ſeveritate militari Pertinacem vel Severum. Sed omnia hæc libido et cupiditas voluptatis mulierariæ ſic perdidit, ut nemo audeat virtutes ejus in literas mittere quem conſtat omnium judicio meruiſſe puniri.

[48] He ravished the wife of Attitianus, an *actuary*, or army agent. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 186. Aurel. Victor in Aurelian.

[49] Pollio aſſigns her an article among the thirty tyrants. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 200.

[50] Pollio in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 196. Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 220. The two Victors, in the lives of Gallienus and Aurelian. Eutrop. ix. 13. Euſeb. in Chron. Of all theſe writers, only the two laſt (but with ſtrong probability) place the fall of Tetricus before that of Zenobia. M. de Boze (in the Academy of Inſcriptions, tom. xxx.) does not wish, and Tillemont (tom. iii. p. 1189.) does not dare, to follow them. I have been fairer than the one, and bolder than the other.

[51] Victor Junior in Aurelian. Eumenius mentions *Batavicæ*; ſome critics, without any reaſon, would fain alter the word to *Bagaudicæ*.

[52] Eumen. in Vet. Panegyr. iv. 8.

[53] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 246. Autun was not reſtored till the reign of Diocletian. See Eumenius de reſtaurandis ſcholis.

[54] Almoſt every thing that is ſaid of the manners of Odenathus and Zenobia, is taken from their lives in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, by Trebellius Pollio, ſee p. 192. 198.

[55] She never admitted her husband's embraces but for the ſake of poſterity. If her hopes were baffled, in the enſuing *month* ſhe reiterated the experiment.

[56] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 192, 193. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 36. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 633. The laſt is clear and probable, the others confuſed and inconſiſtent. The text of Syncellus, if not corrupt, is abſolute nonſenſe.

[57] Odenathus and Zenobia often ſent him, from the ſpoils of the enemy, preſents of gems and toys, which he received with infinite delight.

[58] Some very unjuſt ſuſpicions have been caſt on Zenobia, as if ſhe was acceſſary to her husband's death.

[59] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 180, 181.

[60] See in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 198. Aurelian's teſtimony to her merit; and for the conqueſt of Egypt, Zoſimus, l. i. p. 39, 40.

[61] Timolaus, Herennianus, and Vaballathus. It is ſuppoſed that the

two former were already dead before the war. On the laſt, Aurelian beſtowed a ſmall province of Armenia with the title of King; ſeveral of his medals are ſtill extant. See Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 1190.

[62] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 44.

[63] Vopiſcus (in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 217.) gives us an authentic letter, and a doubtful viſion of Aurelian. Apollonius of Tyana was born about the ſame time as Jeſus Chriſt. His life (that of the former) is related in ſo fabulous a manner by his diſciples, that we are at a loſs to diſcover whether he was a ſage, an impoſtor, or a fanatic.

[64] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 46.

[65] At a place called Immæ. Eutropius, Sextus Rufus, and Jerome, mention only this firſt battle.

[66] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 217. mentions only the ſecond.

[67] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 44—48. His account of the two battles is clear and circumſtantial.

[68] It was five hundred and thirty-ſeven miles from Seleucia, and two hundred and three from the neareſt coaſt of Syria, according to the reckoning of Pliny, who, in a few words (Hiſt. Natur. v. 21.) gives an excellent deſcription of Palmyra.

[69] Some English travellers from Aleppo *diſcovered* the ruins of Palmyra, about the end of the laſt century. Our curioſity has ſince been gratified in a more ſplendid manner by Meſſieurs Wood and Dawkins. For the hiſtory of Palmyra, we may conſult the maſterly diſſertation of Dr. Halley in the Philoſophical Tranſactions; Lowthorp's Abridgement, vol. iii. p. 518.

[70] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 218.

[71] From a very doubtful chronology I have endeavoured to extract the moſt probable date.

[72] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 218. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 50. Though the camel is a heavy beaſt of burden, the dromedary, who is either of the ſame or of a kindred ſpecies, is uſed by the natives of Aſia and Africa on all occaſions which require celerity. The Arabs affirm, that he will run over as much ground in one day, as their fleeteſt horſes can perform in eight or ten. See Buffon Hiſt. Naturelle, tom. xi. p. 222, and Shaw's Travels, p. 167.

[73] Pollio in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 199.

[74] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 219. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 51.

[75] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 219.

[76] See Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 220. 242. As an inſtance of luxury, it is obſerved, that he had glaſs windows. He was remarkable for his ſtrength and appetite, his courage and dexterity. From the letter of Aurelian, we may juſtly infer, that Firmus was the laſt of the rebels, and conſequently that Tetricus was already ſuppreſſed.

[77] See the triumph of Aurelian, deſcribed by Vopiſcus. He relates the particulars with his uſual minuteneſs; and, on this occaſion, they *happen* to be intereſting. Hiſt. Auguſt. 220.

[78] Among barbarous nations, women have often combated by the ſide of their huſbands. But it is *almoſt* impoſſible, that a ſociety of Amazons ſhould ever have exiſted either in the old or new world.

[79] The uſe of *Braccæ*, breeches, or trowſers, was ſtill conſidered in Italy as a Gallic and Barbarian faſhion. The Romans, however, had made great advances towards it. To encircle the legs and thighs with *faſciæ*, or bands, was underſtood, in the time of Pompey and Horace, to be a proof of ill health or effeminacy. In the age of Trajan, the cuſtom was confined to the rich and luxurious. It gradually was adopted by the meaneſt of the people. See a very curious note of Caſaubon, ad Sueton. in Auguſt. c. 82.

[80] Moſt probably the former; the latter, ſeen on the medals of Aurelian, only denote (according to the learned Cardinal Noris) an oriental victory.

[81] The expreſſion of Calphurnius (Eclog. i. 50.), Nullos ducet *captiva* triumphos, as applied to Rome, contains a very manifeſt alluſion and cenſure.

[82] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 199. Hieronym. in Chron. Proſper in Chron. Baronius ſuppoſes that Zenobius, biſhop of Florence in the time of St. Ambroſe, was of her family.

[83] Vopiſc. in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 222. Eutropius, ix. 13. Victor Junior. But Pollio in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 196, ſays, that Tetricus was made corrector of all Italy.

[84] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 197.

[85] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. 222. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 56. He placed in it the images of Belus and of the Sun, which he had brought from Palmyra. It was dedicated in the fourth year of his reign (Euſeb. in Chron.), but was moſt aſſuredly begun immediately on his acceſſion.

[86] See in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 210, the omens of his fortune. His devotion to the Sun appears in his letters, on his medals, and is mentioned in the Cæſars of Julian. Commentaire de Spanheim, p. 109.

[87] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 221.

[88] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 222. Aurelian calls thoſe ſoldiers *Hiberi Ripenſes*, *Caſtriani*, and *Daciſci*.

[89] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 56. Eutropius, ix. 14. Aurel. Victor.

[90] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 222. Aurel. Victor.

[91] It already raged before Aurelian's return from Egypt. See Vopiſcus, who quotes an original letter. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 244.

[92] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 222. The two Victors. Eutropius, ix. 14. Zoſimus (l. i. p. 43.) mentions only three ſenators, and places their death before the eaſtern war.

[93] Nulla catenati feralis pompa ſenatûs
Carnificum laſſabit opus; nec carcere pleno
Infelix raros numerabit curia Patres.
Calphurn. Eclog. i. 60.

[94] According to the younger Victor, he ſometimes wore the diadem. *Deus* and *Dominus* appear on his medals.

[95] It was the obſervation of Diocletian. See Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 224.

[96] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 221. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 57. Eutrop. ix. 15. The two Victors.

CHAP. XII.

[1] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 222. Aurelius Victor mentions a formal deputation from the troops to the ſenate.

[2] Vopiſcus, our principal authority, wrote at Rome, ſixteen years only after the death of Aurelian; and, beſides the recent notoriety of the facts, conſtantly draws his materials from the Journals of the Senate, and the original papers of the Ulpian library. Zoſimus and Zonaras appear as ignorant of this tranſaction as they were in general of the Roman conſtitution.

[3] Liv. i. 17. Dionyſ. Halicarn. l. ii. p. 115. Plutarch in Numa, p. 60. The firſt of theſe writers relates the ſtory like an orator, the ſecond like a lawyer, and the third like a moraliſt, and none of them probably without ſome intermixture of fable.

[4] Vopiſcus (in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 227.) calls him 'primæ ſententiæ 'conſularis,' and ſoon afterwards *Princeps ſenatûs*. It is natural to ſuppoſe, that the monarchs of Rome, diſdaining that humble title, reſigned it to the moſt ancient of the ſenators.

[5] The only objection to this genealogy, is, that the hiſtorian was named Cornelius, the emperor, Claudius. But under the lower empire, ſurnames were extremely various and uncertain.

[6] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 637. The Alexandrian Chronicle, by an obvious miſtake, transfers that age to Aurelian.

[7] In the year 273, he was ordinary conſul. But he muſt have been Suffectus many years before, and moſt probably under Valerian.

[8] *Bis millies octingenties*. Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 229. This ſum, according to the old ſtandard, was equivalent to eight hundred and forty thouſand Roman pounds of ſilver, each of the value of three pounds ſterling. But in the age of Tacitus, the coin had loſt much of its weight and purity.

[9] After his acceſſion, he gave orders that ten copies of the hiſtorian ſhould be annually tranſcribed and placed in the public libraries. The Roman libraries have long ſince periſhed, and the moſt valuable part of Tacitus was preſerved in a ſingle MS. and diſcovered in a monaſtery of Weſtphalia. See Bayle, Dictionnaire, Art. *Tacite*, and Lipſius ad Annal. ii. 9.

[10] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. 227.

[11] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 228. Tacitus addreſſed the Prætorians by the appellation of *ſanctiſſimi milites*, and the people by that of *ſacratiſſimi Quirites*.

[12] In his manumiſſions he never exceeded the number of an hundred,

as limited by the Cæcinian law, which was enacted under Auguſtus, and at length repealed by Juſtinian. See Caſaubon ad locum Vopiſci.

[13] See the lives of Tacitus, Florianus, and Probus, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory; we may be well aſſured, that whatever the ſoldier gave, the ſenator had already given.

[14] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 216. The paſſage is perfectly clear; yet both Caſaubon and Salmaſius wish to correct it.

[15] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 230, 232, 233. The ſenators celebrated the happy reſtoration with hecatombs and public rejoicings.

[16] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 228.

[17] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 230. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 57. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 637. Two paſſages in the life of Probus (p. 236. 238.) convince me, that theſe Scythian invaders of Pontus were Alani. If we may believe Zoſimus (l. i. p. 58.), Florianus purſued them as far as the Cimmerian Boſphorus. But he had ſcarcely time for ſo long and difficult an expedition.

[18] Eutropius and Aurelius Victor only ſay that he died; Victor Junior adds, that it was of a fever. Zoſimus and Zonaras affirm, that he was killed by the ſoldiers. Vopiſcus mentions both accounts, and ſeems to heſitate. Yet ſurely theſe jarring opinions are eaſily reconciled.

[19] According to the two Victors, he reigned exactly two hundred days.

[20] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 231. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 58, 59. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 637. Aurelius Victor ſays, that Probus aſſumed the empire in Illyricum; an opinion which (though adopted by a very learned man) would throw that period of hiſtory into inextricable confuſion.

[21] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 229.

[22] He was to ſend judges to the Parthians, Perſians, and Sarmatians, a preſident to Taprobana, and a proconſul to the Roman iſland (ſuppoſed by Caſaubon and Salmaſius to mean Britain). Such a hiſtory as mine (ſays Vopiſcus with proper modeſty) will not ſubſiſt a thouſand years to expoſe or juſtify the prediction.

[23] For the private life of Probus, ſee Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 234—237.

[24] According to the Alexandrian Chronicle, he was fifty at the time of his death.

[25] The letter was addreſſed to the Prætorian præfect, whom (on condition of his good behaviour) he promiſed to continue in his great office. See Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 237.

[26] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 237. The date of the letter is aſſuredly faulty. Inſtead of *Non. Februar.* we may read *Non. Auguſt.*

[27] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 238. It is odd, that the ſenate ſhould treat Probus leſs favourably than Marcus Antoninus. The prince had received, even before the death of Pius, *Jus quintæ relationis.* See Capitolin. in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 24.

[28] See the dutiful letter of Probus to the ſenate, after his German victories. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 239.

[29] The date and duration of the reign of Probus are very correctly

aſcertained by Cardinal Noris, in his learned work, De Epochis Syro-Macedonum, p. 96—105. A paſſage of Euſebius connects the ſecond year of Probus, with the æras of ſeveral of the Syrian cities.

[30] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 239.

[31] Zoſimus (l. i. p. 62—65.) tells a very long and trifling ſtory of Lycius the Iſaurian robber.

[32] Zoſim. l. i. p. 65. Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 239, 240. But it ſeems incredible, that the defeat of the Savages of Æthiopia could affect the Perſian monarch.

[33] Beſide theſe well-known chiefs, ſeveral others are named by Vopiſcus (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 241.), whoſe actions have not reached our knowledge.

[34] See the Cæſars of Julian, and Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 238. 240, 241.

[35] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 62. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 240. But the latter ſuppoſes the puniſhment inflicted with the conſent of their kings; if ſo, it was partial, like the offence.

[36] See Cluver. Germania Antiqua, l. iii. Ptolemy places in their country the city of Caliſia, probably Calish in Sileſia.

[37] *Feralis umbra*, is the expreſſion of Tacitus: it is ſurely a very bold one.

[38] Tacit. Germ. (c. 43.)

[39] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 238.

[40] Hiſt. Auguſt p. 238, 239. Vopiſcus quotes a letter from the emperor to the ſenate, in which he mentions his deſign of reducing Germany into a province.

[41] Strabo, l. vii. According to Velleius Paterculus (ii. 108.), Maroboduus led his Marcomanni into Bohemia: Cluverius (German. Antiq iii. 8.) proves that it was from Swabia.

[42] Theſe ſettlers from the payment of tythes were denominated, *Decumates*. Tacit. Germania, c. 29.

[43] See Notes de l'Abbé de la Bleterie à la Germanie de Tacite, p. 183. His account of the wall is chiefly borrowed (as he ſays himſelf) from the *Alſatia Illuſtrata* of Schœpflin.

[44] See Recherches ſur les Chinois et les Egyptiens, tom. ii. p. 81—102. The anonymous author is well acquainted with the globe in general, and with Germany in particular: with regard to the latter, he quotes a work of M. Hanſelman; but he ſeems to confound the wall of Probus, deſigned againſt the Alemanni, with the fortification of the Mattiaci, conſtructed in the neighbourhood of Francfort againſt the Catti.

[45] He diſtributed about fifty or ſixty Barbarians to a *Numerus*, as it was then called, a corps with whoſe eſtabliſhed number we are not exactly acquainted.

[46] Caden's Britannia, Introduction, p. 136; but he ſpeaks from a very doubtful conjecture.

[47] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 62. According to Vopiſcus, another body of Vandals was leſs faithful.

[48] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 240. They were probably expelled by the Goths. Zoſim. l. i. p. 66.

[49] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 240.

[50] Panegyr. Vet. v. 18. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 66.

[51] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 245, 246. The unfortunate orator had ſtudied rhetoric at Carthage, and was therefore more probably a Moor (Zoſim. l. i. p. 60.) than a Gaul, as Vopiſcus calls him.

[52] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 638.

[53] A very ſurpriſing inſtance is recorded of the proweſs of Proculus. He had taken one hundred Sarmatian virgins. The reſt of the ſtory he muſt relate in his own language; Ex his unâ nocte decem inivi: omnes tamen, quod in me erat, mulieres intra dies quindecim reddidi. Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 246.

[54] Proculus, who was a native of Albengue on the Genoeſe coaſt, armed two thouſand of his own ſlaves. His riches were great, but they were acquired by robbery. It was afterwards a ſaying of his family, Nec latrones eſſe, nec principes ſibi placere. Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 247.

[55] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 240.

[56] Zoſim. l. i. p. 66.

[57] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 236.

[58] Aurel. Victor in Prob. But the policy of Hannibal, unnoticed by any more ancient writer, is irreconcileable with the hiſtory of his life. He left Africa when he was nine years old, returned to it when he was forty-five, and immediately loſt his army in the deciſive battle of Zama. Livius, xxx. 37.

[59] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 240. Eutrop. ix. 17. Aurel. Victor in Prob. Victor Junior. He revoked the prohibition of Domitian, and granted a general permiſſion of planting vines to the Gauls, the Britons, and the Pannonians.

[60] Julian beſtows a ſevere, and indeed exceſſive, cenſure on the rigour of Probus, who, as he thinks, almoſt deſerved his fate.

[61] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 241. He laviſhes on this idle hope a large ſtock of very foolish eloquence.

[62] Turris ferrata. It ſeems to have been a moveable tower, and caſed with iron.

[63] Probus, et vere probus ſitus eſt: Victor omnium gentium Barbararum: victor etiam tyrannorum.

[64] Yet all this may be conciliated. He was born at Narbonne in Illyricum, confounded by Eutropius with the more famous city of that name in Gaul. His father might be an African, and his mother a noble Roman. Carus himſelf was educated in the capital. See Scaliger, Animadverſion. ad Euſeb. Chron. p. 241.

[65] Probus had requeſted of the ſenate an equeſtrian ſtatue and a marble palace, at the public expence, as a juſt recompence of the ſingular merit of Carus. Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 249.

[66] Vopiſcus.

[66] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 242. 249. Julian excludes the emperor Carus and both his ſons from the banquet of the Cæſars.

[67] John Malela, tom. i. p 401. But the authority of that ignorant Greek is very ſlight. He ridiculously derives from Carus, the city of Carrhæ, and the province of Caria, the latter of which is mentioned by Homer.

[68] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 249. Carus congratulated the ſenate, that one of their own order was made emperor.

[69] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 242.

[70] See the firſt eclogue of Calphurnius. The deſign of it is preferred by Fontenelle, to that of Virgil's Pollio. See tom. iii. p. 148.

[71] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 363. Eutropius, ix. 18. Pagi Annal.

[72] Agathias, l. iv. p. 135. We find one of his ſayings in the Bibliothèque Orientale of M. d'Herbelot. "The definition of humanity includes all other virtues."

[73] Syneſius tells this ſtory of Carinus; and it is much more natural to underſtand it of Carus, than (as Petavius and Tillemont chuſe to do) of Probus.

[74] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 250. Eutropius, ix. 18. The two Victors.

[75] To the Perſian victory of Carus, I refer the dialogue of the *Philopatris*, which has ſo long been an object of diſpute among the learned. But to explain and juſtify my opinion, would require a diſſertation.

[76] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 250. Yet Eutropius, Feſtus, Rufus, the two Victors, Jerome, Sidonius Apollinaris, Syncellus and Zonaras, all aſcribe the death of Carus to lightning.

[77] See Nemeſian. Cynegeticon, v. 71, etc.

[78] See Feſtus and his commentators, on the word *Scribonianum*. *Places* ſtruck with lightning, were ſurrounded with a wall: *things* were buried with myſterious ceremony.

[79] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 250. Aurelius Victor ſeems to believe the prediction, and to approve the retreat.

[80] Nemeſian. Cynegeticon, v. 69. He was a contemporary, but a poet.

[81] *Cancellarius*. This word, ſo humble in its origin, has by a ſingular fortune roſe into the title of the firſt great office of ſtate in the monarchies of Europe. See Caſaubon and Salmaſius, ad Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 253.

[82] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 253, 254. Eutropius, ix. 19. Victor Junior. The reign of Diocletian indeed was ſo long and proſperous, that it muſt have been very unfavourable to the reputation of Carinus.

[83] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 254. He calls him Carus, but the ſenſe is ſufficiently obvious, and the words were often confounded.

[84] See Calphurnius, Eclog. vii. 43. We may obſerve, that the ſpectacles of Probus were ſtill recent, and that the poet is ſeconded by the hiſtorian.

[85] The philoſopher Montaigne (Eſſais, l. iii. 6.) gives a very juſt and lively view of Roman magnificence in theſe ſpectacles.

[86] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 240.

[87] They are called *Onagri*; but the number is too inconſiderable for mere wild-aſſes. Cuper (de Elephantis exercitat. ii. 7.) has proved from Oppian, Dion, and an anonymous Greek, that zebras had been ſeen at Rome. They were brought from ſome iſland of the ocean, perhaps Madagaſcar.

[88] Carinus gave an hippopotamus (ſee Calphurn. Eclog. vii. 66.) In the latter ſpectacles, I do not recollect any crocodiles, of which Auguſtus once exhibited thirty-ſix. — Dion Caſſius, l. lv. p. 781.

[89] Capitolin. in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 164, 165. We are not acquainted with the animals whom he calls *archeleontes*, ſome read *argoleontes*, others *agrioleontes*: both corrections are very nugatory.

[90] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. viii. 6. from the annals of Piſo.

[91] See Maffei, Verona Illuſtrata, p. iv. l. i. c. 2.

[92] Maffei, l. ii. c. 2. The height was very much exaggerated by the ancients. It reached almoſt to the heavens, according to Calphurnius (Eclog. vii. 23.) and ſurpaſſed the ken of human ſight, according to Ammianus Marcellinus (xvi. 10.). Yet how trifling to the great pyramid of Egypt, which riſes 500 feet perpendicular!

[93] According to different copies of Victor, we read 77,000, or 87,000 ſpectators; but Maffei (l. ii. c. 12.) finds room on the open ſeats for no more than 34,000. The remainder were contained in the upper covered galleries.

[94] See Maffei, l. ii. c. 5 — 12. He treats the very difficult ſubject with all poſſible clearneſs, and like an architect, as well as an antiquarian.

[95] Calphurn. Eclog. vii. 64. 73. Theſe lines are curious, and the whole Eclogue has been of infinite uſe to Maffei. Calphurnius, as well as Martial (ſee his firſt book), was a poet; but when they deſcribed the amphitheatre, they both wrote from their own ſenſes, and to thoſe of the Romans.

[96] Conſult. Plin. Hiſt. Natur. xxxiii. 16. xxxvii. 11.

[97] Balteus en gemmis, en inlita porticus auro
Certatim radiant, etc. Calphurn. vii.

[98] Et Martis vultus et Apollinis eſſe putavi, ſays Calphurnius; but John Malela, who had perhaps ſeen pictures of Carinus, deſcribes him as thick, ſhort, and white; tom. i. p. 403.

[99] With regard to the time when theſe Roman games were celebrated, Scaliger, Salmaſius, and Cuper, have given themſelves a great deal of trouble to perplex a very clear ſubject.

[100] Nemeſianus (in the Cynegeticons) ſeems to anticipate in his fancy that auſpicious day.

[101] He won all the crowns from Nemeſianus, with whom he vied in didactic poetry. The ſenate erected a ſtatue to the ſon of Carus, with

a very ambiguous inſcription, "To the moſt powerful of orators." See Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 251.

[102] A more natural cauſe, at leaſt, than that aſſigned by Vopiſcus (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 251.), inceſſantly weeping for his father's death.

[103] In the Perſian war, Aper was ſuſpected of a deſign to betray Carus. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 250.

[104] We are obliged to the Alexandrian Chronicle, p. 274, for the knowledge of the time and place where Diocletian was elected emperor.

[105] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 251. Eutrop. ix. 18. Hieronym. in Chron. According to theſe *judicious* writers, the death of Numerian was diſcovered by the ſtench of his dead body. Could no aromatics be found in the Imperial houſehold?

[106] Aurel. Victor. Eutropius, ix. 20. Hieronym. in Chron.

[107] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 252. The reaſon why Dioclétian killed *Aper* (a wild boar), was founded on a prophecy and a pun, as foolish as they are well known.

[108] Eutropius marks its ſituation very accurately; it was between the Mons Aureus and Viminiacum. M. d'Anville (Géographie Ancienne, tom. i. p. 304,) places Margus at Kaſtolatz in Servia, a little below Belgrade and Semendria.

[109] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 254. Eutropius, ix. 20. Aurelius Victor. Victor in Epitome.

CHAP. XIII.

[1] Eutrop. ix. 19. Victor in Epitom. The town ſeems to have been properly called Doclia, from a ſmall tribe of Illyrians (ſee Cellarius, Geograph. Antiqua, tom. i. p. 393.) and the original name of the fortunate ſlave was probably Docles; he firſt lengthened it to the Grecian harmony of Diocles, and at length to the Roman majeſty of Diocletianus. He likewiſe aſſumed the Patrician name of Valerius, and it is uſually given him by Aurelius Victor.

[2] See Dacier on the ſixth ſatire of the ſecond book of Horace. Cornel. Nepos, in Vit. Eumen. c. 1.

[3] Lactantius (or whoever was the author of the little treatiſe De Mortibus Perſecutorum) accuſes Diocletian of *timidity* in two places, c. 7, 8. In chap. 9, he ſays of him, "erat in omni tumultu metículoſus et animi diſjectus."

[4] In this encomium, Aurelius Victor ſeems to convey a juſt, though indirect, cenſure of the cruelty of Conſtantius. It appears from the Faſti, that Ariſtobulus remained præfect of the city, and that he ended with Diocletian, the conſulſhip which he had commenced with Carinus.

[5] Aurelius Victor ſtyles Diocletian, "Parentem potius quam Dominum." See Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 30.

[6] The queſtion of the time when Maximian received the honours of Cæſar and Auguſtus has divided modern critics, and given occaſion to

a great deal of learned wrangling. I have followed M. de Tillemont (Hiſtoire des Empereurs, tom. iv. p. 500—505.), who has weighed the ſeveral reaſons and difficulties with his ſcrupulous accuracy.

[7] In an oration delivered before him (Panegyr. Vet. ii. 8.), Mamertinus expreſſes a doubt whether his hero, in imitating the conduct of Hannibal and Scipio, had ever heard of their names. From thence we may fairly infer, that Maximian was more deſirous of being conſidered as a ſoldier than as a man of letters: and it is in this manner that we can often translate the language of flattery into that of truth.

[8] Lactantius de M. P. c. 8. Aurelius Victor. As among the Panegyrics, we find orations pronounced in praiſe of Maximian, and others which flatter his adverſaries at his expence, we derive ſome knowledge from the contraſt.

[9] See the ſecond and third Panegyrics, particularly iii. 3. 10. 14. but it would be tedious to copy the diffuſe and affected expreſſions of their falſe eloquence. With regard to the titles, conſult Aurel. Victor, Lactantius de M. P. c. 52. Spanheim de Uſu Numiſmatum, etc. Diſſertat. xii. 8.

[10] Aurelius Victor. Victor in Epitome. Eutrop. ix. 22. Lactant. de M. P. c. 8. Hieronym. in Chron.

[11] It is only among the modern Greeks that Tillemont can diſcover his appellation of Chlorus. Any remarkable degree of paleneſs ſeems inconſiſtent with the *rubor* mentioned in Panegyric. v. 19.

[12] Julian, the grandſon of Conſtantius, boaſts that his family was derived from the warlike Mœſians. Miſopogon, p. 348. The Dardanians dwelt on the edge of Mœſia.

[13] Galerius married Valeria, the daughter of Diocletian; if we ſpeak with ſtrictneſs, Theodora, the wife of Conſtantius, was daughter only to the wife of Maximian. Spanheim Diſſertat. xi. 2.

[14] This diviſion agrees with that of the four præfectures; yet there is ſome reaſon to doubt whether Spain was not a province of Maximian. See Tillemont, tom iv. p. 517.

[15] Julian in Cæſarib. p. 315. Spanheim's notes to the French tranſlation, p. 122.

[16] The general name of *Bagaudæ* (in the ſignification of Rebels) continued till the fifth century in Gaul. Some critics derive it from a Celtic word *Bagad*, a tumultuous aſſembly. Scaliger ad Euſeb. Du Cange Gloſſar.

[17] Chronique de Froiſſart, vol. i. c. 182. ii. 73—79. The *naïveté* of his ſtory is loſt in our beſt modern writers.

[18] Cæſar de Bell. Gallic. vi. 13. Orgetorix, the Helvetian, could arm for his defence a body of ten thouſand ſlaves.

[19] Their oppreſſion and miſery are acknowledged by Eumenius (Panegyr. vi. 8.), Gallias efferatus injuriis.

[20] Panegyr. Vet. ii. 4. Aurelius Victor.

[21] Ælianus and Amandus. We have medals coined by them. Golzius in Theſ. R. A. p. 117. 121.

[22] Levibus prœliis domuit. Eutrop. ix. 20.

[23] The fact reſts indeed on very slight authority, a life of St. Babolinus, which is probably of the ſeventh century. See Ducheſne Scriptores Rer. Francicar. tom. i. p. 662.

[24] Aurelius Victor calls them Germans. Eutropius (ix. 21.) gives them the name of Saxons. But Eutropius lived in the enſuing century, and ſeems to uſe the language of his own times.

[25] The three expreſſions of Eutropius, Aurelius Victor, and Eumenius, "viliſſime natus," "Bataviæ alumnus," and "Menapiæ civis," give us a very doubtful account of the birth of Carauſius. Dr. Stukely, however, (Hiſt. of Carauſius, p. 62.) chuſes to make him a native of St. David's, and a prince of the blood royal of Britain. The former idea he had found in Richard of Cirenceſter, p. 44.

[26] Panegyr. v. 12. Britain at this time was ſecure, and slightly guarded.

[27] Panegyr. Vet. v. 11. vii. 9. The orator Eumenius wished to exalt the glory of the hero (Conſtantius), with the importance of the conqueſt. Notwithſtanding our laudable partiality for our native country, it is difficult to conceive, that, in the beginning of the fourth century, England deſerved *all* theſe commendations. A century and half before, it hardly paid its own eſtabliſhment. See Appian in Procem.

[28] As a great number of medals of Carauſius are ſtill preſerved, he is become a very favourite object of antiquarian curioſity, and every circumſtance of his life and actions has been inveſtigated with ſagacious accuracy. Dr. Stukely in particular has devoted a large volume to the British emperor. I have uſed his materials, and rejected moſt of his fanciful conjectures.

[29] When Mamertinus pronounced his firſt panegyric, the naval preparations of Maximian were completed; and the orator preſaged an aſſured victory. His ſilence in the ſecond Panegyric, might alone inform us, that the expedition had not ſucceeded.

[30] Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, and the medals (Pax Auggg.) inform us of this temporary reconciliation: though I will not preſume (as Dr. Stukely has done, Medallic Hiſtory of Carauſius, p. 86, etc.) to inſert the identical articles of the treaty.

[31] With regard to the recovery of Britain, we obtain a few hints from Aurelius Victor and Eutropius.

[32] John Malela, in Chron. Antiochen, tom. i. p. 408, 409.

[33] Zoſim. l. i. p. 3. That partial hiſtorian ſeems to celebrate the vigilance of Dioclesian, with a deſign of expoſing the negligence of Conſtantine; we may, however, liſten to an orator, "Nam quid ego alarum et cohortium caſtra percenſeam, toto Rheni et Iſtri et Euphratis limite reſtituta." Panegyr. Vet. iv. 18.

[34] Ruunt omnes in ſanguinem ſuum populi, quibus non contigit eſſe Romanis, obſtinatæque feritatis pœnas nunc ſponte perſolvunt. Panegyr. Vet. iii. 16. Mamertinus illuſtrates the fact, by the example of almoſt all the nations of the world.

[35] He complained, though not with the ſtricteſt truth; "Jam fluxiſſe annos quindecim in quibus, in Illyrico, ad ripam Danubii relegatus cum gentibus barbaris luctaret." Lactant. de M. P. c. 18.

[36] In the Greek text of Euſebius, we read ſix thouſand, a number which I have preferred to the ſixty thouſand of Jerome, Oroſius, Eutropius, and his Greek translator Pæanius.

[37] Panegyr. Vet. vii. 21.

[38] There was a ſettlement of the Sarmatians in the neighbourhood of Treves, which ſeems to have been deſerted by thoſe lazy Barbarians: Auſonius ſpeaks of them in his Moſelle.

Unde iter ingrediens nemoroſa per avia ſolum,
Et nulla humani ſpectans veſtigia cultus
. . . . . .
Arvaque Sauromatûm nuper metata colonis.

There was a town of the Carpi in the Lower Mæſia.

[39] See the rhetorical exultation of Eumenius. Panegyr. vii. 9.

[40] Scaliger (Animadverſ. ad Euſeb. p. 243.) decides in his uſual manner, that the Quinque gentiani, or five African nations, were the five great cities, the Pentapolis of the inoffenſive province of Cyrene.

[41] After his defeat, Julian ſtabbed himſelf with a dagger, and immediately leaped into the flames. Victor in Epitome.

[42] Tu ferociſſimos Mauritaniæ populos inacceſſis montium jugis et naturali munitione fidentes, expugnaſti, recepiſti, tranſtuliſti. Panegyr. Vet. vi. 8.

[43] See the deſcription of Alexandria, in Hirtius de Bel. Alexandrin. c. 5.

[44] Eutrop. ix. 24. Oroſius, vii. 25. John Malela in Chron. Antioch. p. 409, 410. Yet Eumenius aſſures us, that Egypt was pacified by the clemency of Diocletian.

[45] Euſebius (in Chron.) places their deſtruction ſeveral years ſooner, and at a time when Egypt itſelf was in a ſtate of rebellion againſt the Romans.

[46] Strabo, l. xvii. p. 1. 172. Pomponius Mela, l. i. c. 4. His words are curious, "Intra, ſi credere libet, vix hominès magiſque ſemiferi; Ægipanes, et *Blemmyes*, et Satyri."

[47] Auſus ſeſe inſerere fortunæ et provocare arma Romana.

[48] See Procopius de Bell. Perſic. l. i. c. 19.

[49] He fixed the public allowance of corn for the people of Alexandria, at two millions of *medimni*; about four hundred thouſand quarters. Chron. Paſchal. p. 276. Procop. Hiſt. Arcan. c. 26.

[50] John Antioch in Excerp. Valeſian. p. 834. Suidas in Diocletian.

[51] See a ſhort hiſtory and confutation of Alchymy, in the works of that philoſophical compiler, La Mothe le Vayer, tom. i. p. 327 — 353.

[52] See the education and ſtrength of Tiridates in the Armenian hiſtory of Moſes of Chorene, l. ii. c. 76. He could ſeize two wild bulls by the horns, and break them off with his hands.

[53] If we give credit to the younger Victor, who ſuppoſes that in the year 323, Licinius was only ſixty years of age, he could ſcarcely be the ſame perſon as the patron of Tiridates; but we know from much better authority (Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. x. c. 8.), that Licinius was at that time in the laſt period of old age: ſixteen years before, he is repreſented with grey hairs, and as the contemporary of Galerius. See Lactant. c. 32. Licinius was probably born about the year 250.

[54] See the ſixty-ſecond and ſixty-third books of Dion Caſſius.

[55] Moſes of Chorene, Hiſt. Armen. l. ii. c. 74. The ſtatues had been erected by Valarſaces, who reigned in Armenia about 130 years before Chriſt, and was the firſt king of the family of Arſaces (ſee Moſes Hiſt. Armen. l. ii. 2, 3.). The deification of the Arſacides is mentioned by Juſtin (xli. 5.) and by Ammianus Marcellinus (xxiii. 6.).

[56] The Armenian nobility was numerous and powerful. Moſes mentions many families which were diſtinguiſhed under the reign of Valarſaces (l. ii. 7.), and which ſtill ſubſiſted in his own time, about the middle of the fifth century. See the preface of his Editors.

[57] She was named Choſroiduchta, and had not the *os patulum* like other women. (Hiſt. Armen. l. ii. c. 79.) I do not underſtand the expreſſion.

[58] In the Armenian Hiſtory (l. ii. 78.) as well as in the Geography (p. 367.), China is called Zenia, or Zenaſtan. It is characterized by the production of ſilk, by the opulence of the natives, and by their love of peace, above all the other nations of the earth.

[59] Vou-ti, the firſt emperor of the ſeventh dynaſty, who then reigned in China, had political tranſactions with Fergana, a province of Sogdiana, and is ſaid to have received a Roman embaſſy (Hiſtoire des Huns, tom. i. p. 38.). In thoſe ages the Chineſe kept a garriſon at Kashgar, and one of their generals, about the time of Trajan, marched as far as the Caſpian ſea. With regard to the intercourſe between China and the weſtern countries, a curious memoir of M. de Guignes may be conſulted, in the Académie des Inſcriptions, tom. xxxii. p. 355.

[60] See Hiſt. Armen. l. ii. c. 81.

[61] Ipſos Perſas ipſumque Regem aſcitis Saocis, et Ruſſis, et Gellis, petit frater Ormies. Panegyric. Vet. iii. 1. The Saccæ were a nation of wandering Scythians, who encamped towards the ſources of the Oxus and the Jaxartes. The Gelli were the inhabitants of Ghilan along the Caſpian ſea, and who ſo long, under the name of Dilemites, infeſted the Perſian monarchy. See d'Herbelot, Bibliothéque Orientale.

[62] Moſes of Chorene takes no notice of this ſecond revolution, which I have been obliged to collect from a paſſage of Ammianus Marcellinus (l. xxiii. 5.). Lactantius ſpeaks of the ambition of Narſes, "Cogitatus domeſticis exemplis avi ſui Saporis ad occupandum orientem magnis copiis inhiabat." De Mort. Perſecut. c. 9.

[63] We may readily believe, that Lactantius aſcribes to cowardice the conduct of Diocletian. Julian, in his oration, ſays, that he remained with all the forces of the empire; a very hyperbolical expreſſion.

[64] Our five abbreviators, Eutropius, Feſtus, the two Victors, and Oroſius, all relate the laſt and great battle; but Oroſius is the only one who ſpeaks of the two former.

[65] The nature of the country is finely deſcribed by Plutarch, in the life of Craſſus, and by Xenophon, in the firſt book of the Anabaſis.

[66] See Foſter's Diſſertation in the ſecond volume of the translation of the Anabaſis by Spelman; which I will venture to recommend as one of the beſt verſions extant.

[67] Hiſt. Armen. l. ii. c. 76. I have transferred this exploit of Tiridates from an imaginary defeat to the real one of Galerius.

[68] Ammian. Marcellin. l. xiv. The mile, in the hands of Eutropius (ix. 24.), of Feſtus (c. 25.), and of Oroſius (vii. 25.), eaſily increaſed to *ſeveral* miles.

[69] Aurelius Victor, Jornandes de Rebus Geticis, c. 21.

[70] Aurelius Victor ſays, "Per Armeniam in hoſtes contendit, quæ ferme ſola, ſeu facilior vincendi via eſt." He followed the conduct of Trajan, and the idea of Julius Cæſar.

[71] Xenophon's Anabaſis, l. iii. For that reaſon the Perſian cavalry encamped ſixty ſtadia from the enemy.

[72] The ſtory is told by Ammianus, l. xxii. Inſtead of *ſaccum* ſome read *ſcutum*.

[73] The Perſians confeſſed the Roman ſuperiority in morals as well as in arms. Eutrop. ix. 24. But this reſpect and gratitude of enemies is very ſeldom to be found in their own accounts.

[74] The account of the negociation is taken from the fragments of Peter the Patrician, in the Excerpta Legationum published in the Byzantine Collection. Peter lived under Juſtinian; but it is very evident, by the nature of his materials, that they are drawn from the moſt authentic and reſpectable writers.

[75] Adeo Victor (ſays Aurelius) ut ni Valerius, cujus nutu omnia gerebantur, abnuiſſet, Romani faſces in provinciam novam ferrentur. Verum pars terrarum tamen nobis utilior quæſita.

[76] He had been governor of Sumium (Pet. Patricius in Excerpt. Legat. p. 30.). This province ſeems to be mentioned by Moſes of Chorene (Geograph. p. 360.), and lay to the Eaſt of Mount Ararat.

[77] By an error of the geographer Ptolemy, the poſition of Singara is removed from the Aboras to the Tigris, which may have produced the miſtake of Peter, in aſſigning the latter river for the boundary, inſtead of the former. The line of the Roman frontier traverſed, but never followed, the courſe of the Tigris.

[78] Procopius de Edificiis, l. ii. c. 6.

[79] Three of the provinces, Zabdicene, Arzanene, and Carduene, are allowed on all ſides. But inſtead of the other two, Peter (in Excerpt. Leg. p. 30.) inſerts Rehimene and Sophene. I have preferred

Ammianus (l. xxv. 7.), becauſe it might be proved, that Sophene was never in the hands of the Perſians, either before the reign of Diocletian, or after that of Jovian. For want of correct maps, like thoſe of M. d'Anville, almoſt all the moderns, with Tillemont and Valeſius at their head, have imagined, that it was in reſpect to Perſia, and not to Rome, that the five provinces were ſituate beyond the Tigris.

[80] Xenophon's Anabaſis, l. iv. Their bows were three cubits in length, their arrows two; they rolled down ſtones that were each a waggon load. The Greeks found a great many villages in that rude country.

[81] According to Eutropius (vi. 9. as the text is repreſented by the beſt MSS.), the city of Tigranocerta was in Arzanene. The names and ſituation of the other three may be faintly traced.

[82] Compare Herodotus, l. i. c. 97. with Moſes Choronenſ. Hiſt. Armen. l. ii. c. 84. and the map of Armenia given by his editors.

[83] Hiberi, locorum potentes, Caſpiâ viâ Sarmatam in Armenios raptim effundunt. Tacit. Annal. vi. 34. See Strabon. Geograph. l. xi. p. 764.

[84] Peter Patricius (in Excerpt. Leg. p. 30.) is the only writer who mentions the Iberian article of the treaty.

[85] Euſeb. in Chron. Pagi ad annum. Till the diſcovery of the treatiſe De Mortibus Perſecutorum, it was not certain that the triumph and the Vicennalia were celebrated at the ſame time.

[86] At the time of the Vicennalia, Galerius ſeems to have kept his ſtation on the Danube. See Lactant. de M. P. c. 38.

[87] Eutropius (ix. 27.) mentions them as a part of the triumph. As the *perſons* had been reſtored to Narſes, nothing more than their *images* could be exhibited.

[88] Livy gives us a ſpeech of Camillus on that ſubject (v. 51—55.), full of eloquence and ſenſibility, in oppoſition to a deſign of removing the ſeat of government from Rome to the neighbouring city of Veii.

[89] Julius Cæſar was reproached with the intention of removing the empire to Ilium or Alexandria. See Sueton. in Cæſar. c. 79. According to the ingenious conjecture of Le Fevre and Dacier, the third ode of the third book of Horace was intended to divert Auguſtus from the execution of a ſimilar deſign.

[90] See Aurelius Victor, who likewiſe mentions the buildings erected by Maximian at Carthage, probably during the Moorish war. We ſhall inſert ſome verſes of Auſonius de Clar. Urb. v.

Et Mediolani mira omnia: copia rerum;
Innumeræ cultæque domus; facunda virorum
Ingenia, et mores læti, tum duplice muro
Amplificata loci ſpecies; populique voluptas
Circus; et incluſi moles cuneata Theatri
Templa, Palatinæque arces, opulenſque Moneta,

Et regio *Herculei* celebris ſub honore lavacri.
Cunctaque marmoreis ornata Periſtyla ſignis;
Mœniaque in valli formam circumdata labro,
Omnia quæ magnis operum velut æmula formis
Excellunt: nec junctæ premit vicinia Romæ.

[91] Lactant. de M. P. c. 17. Libanius, Orat. viii. p. 203.

[92] Lactant. de M. P. c. 17. On a ſimilar occaſion Ammianus mentions the *dicacitas plebis*, as not very agreeable to an Imperial ear. (See l. xvi. c. 10.)

[93] Lactantius accuſes Maximian of deſtroying fictis criminationibus lumina ſenatûs (De M. P. c. 8.). Aurelius Victor ſpeaks very doubtfully of the faith of Diocletian towards his friends.

[94] Truncatæ vires urbis, imminuto prætoriarum cohortium atque in armis vulgi numero. Aurelius Victor. Lactantius attributes to Galerius the proſecution of the ſame plan (c. 26.).

[95] They were old corps ſtationed in Illyricum; and according to the ancient eſtabliſhment, they each conſiſted of ſix thouſand men. They had acquired much reputation by the uſe of the *plumbatæ*, or darts loaded with lead. Each ſoldier carried five of theſe, which he darted from a conſiderable diſtance, with great ſtrength and dexterity. See Vegetius, i. 17.

[96] See the Theodoſian Code, l. vi. tit. ii. with Godefroy's commentary.

[97] See the 12th diſſertation in Spanheim's excellent work de Uſu Numiſmatum. From medals, inſcriptions, and hiſtorians, he examines every title ſeparately, and traces it from Auguſtus to the moment of its diſappearing.

[98] Pliny (in Panegyr. c. 3. 55, etc.) ſpeaks of *Dominus* with execration, as ſynonymous to Tyrant, and oppoſite to Prince. And the ſame Pliny regularly gives that title (in the tenth book of the epiſtles) to his friend rather than maſter, the virtuous Trajan. This ſtrange contradiction puzzles the commentators, who think, and the tranſlators, who can write.

[99] Syneſius de Regno, Edit. Petav. p. 15. I am indebted for this quotation to the Abbé de la Bleterie.

[100] See Vendale de Conſecratione, p. 354, etc. It was cuſtomary for the emperors to mention (in the preamble of laws) their *numen*, *ſacred majeſty*, *divine oracles*, *etc.* According to Tillemont, Gregory of Nazianzen, complains moſt bitterly of the profanation, eſpecially when it was practiſed by an Arian emperor.

[101] See Spanheim de Uſu Numiſmat. Diſſertat. xii.

[102] Aurelius Victor. Eutropius ix. 26. It appears by the Panegyriſts, that the Romans were ſoon reconciled to the name and ceremony of adoration.

[103] The innovations introduced by Diocletian, are chiefly deduced, 1ſt, from ſome very ſtrong paſſages in Lactantius; and, 2dly, from the new and various offices, which, in the Theodoſian code, appear *already* eſtabliſhed in the beginning of the reign of Conſtantine.

[104] Lactant. de M. P. c. 7.

[105] Indicta lex nova quæ ſane illorum temporum modeſtiâ tolerabilis, in perniciem proceſſit. Aurel. Victor, who has treated the character of Diocletian with good ſenſe, though in bad Latin.

[106] Solus omnium, poſt conditum Romanum Imperium, qui ex tanto faſtigio ſponte ad privatæ vitæ ſtatum civilitatemque remearet. Eutrop. ix, 28.

[107] The particulars of the journey and illneſs are taken from Lactantius (c. 17.), who may *ſometimes* be admitted as an evidence of public facts, though very ſeldom of private anecdotes.

[108] Aurelius Victor aſcribes the abdication, which had been ſo variously accounted for, to two cauſes. 1ſt, Diocletian's contempt of ambition; and 2dly, His apprehenſion of impending troubles. One of the panegyriſts (vi. 9.) mentions the age and infirmities of Diocletian, as a very natural reaſon for his retirement.

[109] The difficulties as well as miſtakes attending the dates both of the year and of the day of Diocletian's abdication, are perfectly cleared up by Tillemont, Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. iv. p. 525. Note 19, and by Pagi ad annum.

[110] See Panegyr. Veter. vi. 9. The oration was pronounced after Maximian had reaſſumed the purple.

[111] Eumenius pays him a very fine compliment: "At enim divi-"num illum virum, qui primus imperium et participavit et poſuit, "conſilii et facti ſui non pœnitet; nec amiſiſſe ſe putat quod ſponte "tranſcripſit. Felix beatuſque vere quem veſtra, tantorum principum, "colunt obſequia privatum." Panegyr. Vet. vii. 15.

[112] We are obliged to the younger Victor for this celebrated bon môt. Eutropius mentions the thing in a more general manner.

[113] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 223, 224. Vopiſcus had learned this converſation from his father.

[114] The younger Victor ſlightly mentions the report. But as Diocletian had diſobliged a powerful and ſucceſsful party, his memory has been loaded with every crime and misfortune. It has been affirmed that he died raving mad, that he was condemned as a criminal by the Roman ſenate, etc.

[115] See the Itiner. p. 269. 272. Edit. Weſſel.

[116] The Abbate Fortis, in his Viaggio in Dalmazia, p. 43. (printed at Venice in the year 1774, in two ſmall volumes in quarto) quotes a MS. account of the antiquities of Salona, compoſed by Giambattiſta Giuſtiniani about the middle of the xvith century.

[117] Adam's antiquities of Diocletian's palace at Spalatro, p. 6. We may add a circumſtance or two from the Abbate Fortis: the little ſtream of the Hyader, mentioned by Lucan, produces moſt exquiſite trout, which a ſagacious writer, perhaps a monk, ſuppoſes to have been one of the principal reaſons that determined Diocletian in the choice of his retirement. Fortis, p. 45. The ſame author (p. 38.) obſerves,

that a taſte for agriculture is reviving at Spalatro; and that an experimental farm has lately been eſtabliſhed near the city, by a ſociety of Gentlemen.

[118] Conſtantin. Orat. ad Cœtum Sanct. c. 25. In this ſermon, the emperor, or the biſhop who compoſed it for him, affects to relate the miſerable end of all the perſecutors of the church.

[119] Conſtantin. Porphyr. de Statu Imper. p. 86.

[120] D'Anville, Géographie ancienne, tom. i. p. 162.

[121] Meſſieurs Adam and Cleriſſeau, attended by two draughtſmen, viſited Spalatro in the month of July 1757. The magnificent work which their journey produced, was published in London ſeven years afterwards.

[122] I ſhall quote the words of the Abbate Fortis. "E baſtevolmente "nota agli amatori dell' Architettura, e dell' Antichità, l'opera del "Signor ADAMS, che a donato molto a que' ſuperbi veſtigi coll' "abituale eleganza del ſuo toccalapis e del bulino. In generale la "rozzezza del ſcalpello, e'l cattivo guſto del ſecolo vi gareggiano "colla magnificenza del fabricato." See Viaggio in Dalmazia, p. 40.

[123] The orator Eumenius was ſecretary to the emperors Maximian and Conſtantius, and Profeſſor of Rhetoric in the college of Autun. His ſalary was ſix hundred thouſand ſeſterces, which, according to the loweſt computation of that age, muſt have exceeded three thouſand pounds a year. He generously requeſted the permiſſion of employing it in rebuilding the college. See his Oration De reſtaurandis ſcholis; which, though not exempt from vanity, may atone for his panegyrics.

[124] Porphyry died about the time of Diocletian's abdication. The life of his maſter Plotinus, which he compoſed, will give us the moſt complete idea of the genius of the ſect, and the manners of its profeſſors. This very curious piece is inſerted in Fabricius, Bibliotheca Græca, tom. iv. p. 88—148.

CHAP. XIV.

[1] M. de Monteſquieu (Conſidérations ſur la Grandeur et la Décadence des Romains, c. 17.) ſuppoſes, on the authority of Oroſius and Euſebius, that, on this occaſion, the empire, for the firſt time, was *really* divided into two parts. It is difficult, however, to diſcover in what reſpect the plan of Galerius differed from that of Diocletian.

[2] Hic non modo amabilis, ſed etiam venerabilis Gallis fuit; præcipue quod Diocletiani ſuſpectam prudentiam, et Maximiani ſanguinariam violentiam imperio ejus evaſerant. Eutrop. Breviar. x. 1.

[3] Divitiis Provincialium (mel. *provinciarum*) ac privatorum ſtudens, fiſci commoda non admodum affectans; ducenſque melius publicas opes a privatis haberi, quam intra unum clauſtrum reſervari. Id.

ibid. He carried this maxim ſo far, that whenever he gave an entertainment, he was obliged to borrow a ſervice of plate.

[4] Lactantius de Mort. Perſecutor. c. 18. Were the particulars of this conference more conſiſtent with truth and decency, we might ſtill ask, how they came to the knowledge of an obſcure rhetorician? But there are many hiſtorians who put us in mind of the admirable ſaying of the great Condé to cardinal de Retz; "Ces coquins nous "font parler et agir, comme ils auraient fait eux-mêmes à notre "place."

[5] Sublatus nuper a pecoribus et ſilvis (ſays Lactantius de M. P. c. 19.) ſtatim Scutarius, continuo Protector, mox Tribunus, poſtridie Cæſar, accepit Orientem. Aurelius Victor is too liberal in giving him the whole portion of Diocletian.

[6] His diligence and fidelity are acknowledged even by Lactantius, de M. P. c. 18.

[7] Theſe ſchemes, however, reſt only on the very doubtful authority of Lactantius, de M. P. c. 20.

[8] This tradition, unknown to the contemporaries of Conſtantine, was invented in the darkneſs of monaſteries, was embellished by Jeffrey of Monmouth, and the writers of the xiith century, has been defended by our antiquarians of the laſt age, and is ſeriously related in the ponderous hiſtory of England, compiled by Mr. Carte (vol. i. p. 147.). He tranſports, however, the kingdom of Coil, the imaginary father of Helena, from Eſſex to the wall of Antoninus.

[9] Eutropius (x. 2.) expreſſes, in a few words, the real truth, and the occaſion of the error, "*ex obſcuriori matrimonio* ejus filius." Zoſimus (l. ii. p. 78.) eagerly ſeized the moſt unfavourable report, and is followed by Oroſius (vii. 25.), whoſe authority is oddly enough overlooked by the indefatigable but partial Tillemont. By inſiſting on the divorce of Helena, Diocletian acknowledged her marriage.

[10] There are three opinions with regard to the place of Conſtantine's birth. 1. Our English antiquarians were uſed to dwell with rapture on the words of his panegyriſt; "Britannias illic oriendo nobiles feciſti." But this celebrated paſſage may be referred with as much propriety to the acceſſion as to the nativity of Conſtantine. 2. Some of the modern Greeks have aſcribed the honour of his birth to Drepanum, a town on the gulph of Nicomedia (Cellarius, tom. ii. p. 174.) which Conſtantine dignified with the name of Helenopolis, and Juſtinian adorned with many ſplendid buildings (Procop. de Ædificiis, v. 2.) It is indeed probable enough, that Helena's father kept an inn at Drepanum; and that Conſtantius might lodge there when he returned from a Perſian embaſſy in the reign of Aurelian. But in the wandering life of a ſoldier, the place of his marriage, and the places where his children are born, have very little connection with each other. 3. The claim of Naiſſus is ſupported by the anonymous writer, published at the end of Ammianus, p. 719, and who in general copied very good

materials; and it is confirmed by Julius Firmicius (de Aſtrologiâ, l. i. c. 4.), who flourished under the reign of Conſtantine himſelf. Some objections have been raiſed againſt the integrity of the text, and the application of the paſſage of Firmicius; but the former is eſtabliſhed by the beſt MSS. and the latter is very ably defended by Lipſius de Magnitudine Romanâ, l. iv. c. 11. et Supplement.

[11] Literis minus inſtructus. Anonym. ad Ammian. p. 710.

[12] Galerius, or perhaps his own courage, expoſed him to ſingle combat with a Sarmatian (Anonym. p. 710.) and with a monſtrous lion. See Praxagoras apud Photium, p. 63. Praxagoras, an Athenian philoſopher, had written a life of Conſtantine, in two books, which are now loſt. He was a contemporary.

[13] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 78, 79. Lactantius de M. P. c. 24. The former tells a very foolish ſtory, that Conſtantine cauſed all the poſt-horſes, which he had uſed, to be hamſtrung. Such a bloody execution, without preventing a purſuit, would have ſcattered ſuſpicions, and might have ſtopped his journey.

[14] Anonym. p. 710. Panegyr. Veter. vii. 4. But Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 79. Euſebius de Vit. Conſtant. l. i. c. 21. and Lactantius de M. P. c. 24. ſuppoſe, with leſs accuracy, that he found his father on his death-bed.

[15] Cunctis qui aderant annitentibus, ſed præcipue Croco (*alii Eroco*) Alamannorum Rege, auxilii gratiâ Conſtantium comitato, imperium capit. Victor Junior, c. 41. This is perhaps the firſt inſtance of a barbarian king, who aſſiſted the Roman arms with an independent body of his own ſubjects. The practice grew familiar, and at laſt became fatal.

[16] His panegyriſt Eumenius (vii. 8.) ventures to affirm, in the preſence of Conſtantine, that he put ſpurs to his horſe, and tried, but in vain, to eſcape from the hands of his ſoldiers.

[17] Lactantius de M. P. c. 25. Eumenius (vii. 8.) gives a rhetorical turn to the whole tranſaction.

[18] The choice of Conſtantine, by his dying father, which is warranted by reaſon, and inſinuated by Eumenius, ſeems to be confirmed by the moſt unexceptionable authority, the concurring evidence of Lactantius (de M. P. c. 24.) and of Libanius (Oration i.); of Euſebius (in Vit. Conſtantin. l. i. c. 18. 21.) and of Julian (Oration i.)

[19] Of the three ſiſters of Conſtantine, Conſtantia married the emperor Licinius, Anaſtaſia the Cæſar Baſſianus, and Eutropia the conſul Nepotianus. The three brothers were, Dalmatius, Julius Conſtantius, and Hannibalianus, of whom we ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak hereafter.

[20] See Gruter Inſcrip. p. 178. The ſix princes are all mentioned, Diocletian and Maximian as the ſenior Auguſti and fathers of the emperors. They jointly dedicate, for the uſe of *their own* Romans, this magnificent edifice. The architects have delineated the ruins of theſe *Thermæ*; and the antiquarians, particularly Donatus and Nardini, have aſcertained the ground which they covered. One of the great

rooms is now the Carthuſian church; and even one of the porter's lodges is ſufficient to form another church, which belongs to the Feuillans.

[21] See Lactantius de M. P. c. 26. 31.

[22] The vith Panegyric repreſents the conduct of Maximian in the moſt favourable light; and the ambiguous expreſſion of Aurelius Victor, "retractante diu," may ſignify, either that he contrived, or that he oppoſed, the conſpiracy. See Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 79. and Lactantius de M. P. c. 26.

[23] The circumſtances of this war, and the death of Severus, are very doubtfully and variously told in our ancient fragments (ſee Tillemont, Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. iv. part i. p. 555.) I have endeavoured to extract from them a conſiſtent and probable narration.

[24] The vith Panegyric was pronounced to celebrate the elevation of Conſtantine; but the prudent orator avoids the mention either of Galerius or of Maxentius. He introduces only one ſlight alluſion to the actual troubles, and to the majeſty of Rome.

[25] With regard to this negociation, ſee the fragments of an anonymous Hiſtorian publiſhed by Valeſius at the end of his edition of Ammianus Marcellinus, p. 711. Theſe fragments have furniſhed us with ſeveral curious, and as it ſhould ſeem authentic, anecdotes.

[26] Lactantius de M. P. c. 28. The former of theſe reaſons is probably taken from Virgil's Shepherd; "Illam ego huic noſtræ ſimilem Meli„ bœe putavi, etc." Lactantius delights in theſe poetical alluſions.

[27] Caſtra ſuper Tuſci ſi ponere Tybridis undas; (*jubeas*)
Heſperios audax veniam metator in agros.
Tu quoſcunque voles in planum effundere muros;
His aries actus diſperget ſaxa lacertis;
Illa licet penitus tolli quam juſſeris urbem
Roma ſit. Lucan. Phaſſal. i. 381.

[28] Lactantius de M. P. c. 27. Zoſim. l. ii. p. 82. The latter inſinuates, that Conſtantine, in his interview with Maximian, had promiſed to declare war againſt Galerius.

[29] M. de Tillemont (Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. iv. part i. p. 559.) has proved, that Licinius, without paſſing through the intermediate rank of Cæſar, was declared Auguſtus, the 11th of November, A. D. 307, after the return of Galerius from Italy.

[30] Lactantius de M. P. c. 32. When Galerius declared Licinius Auguſtus with himſelf, he tried to ſatisfy his younger aſſociates, by inventing, for Conſtantine and *Maximin* (not *Maxentius*, ſee Baluze, p. 81.) the new title of ſons of the Auguſti. But when Maximin acquainted him that he had been ſaluted Auguſtus by the army, Galerius was obliged to acknowledge him, as well as Conſtantine, as equal aſſociates in the imperial dignity.

[31] See Panegyr. Vet. vi. 9. Audi doloris noſtri liberam vocem, etc. The whole paſſage is imagined with artful flattery, and expreſſed with an eaſy flow of eloquence.

[32] Lactantius de M. P. c. 28. Zoſim. l. ii. p. 82. A report was ſpread, that Maxentius was the ſon of ſome obſcure Syrian, and had been ſubſtituted by the wife of Maximian as her own child. See Aurelius Victor, Anonym. Valeſian. and Panegyr. Vet. ix. 3, 4.

[33] Ab urbe pulſum, ab Italiâ fugatum, ab Illyrico repudiatum, tuis provinciis, tuis copiis, tuo palatio recepiſti. Eumen. in Panegyr. Vet. vii. 14.

[34] Lactantius de M. P. c. 29. Yet after the reſignation of the purple, Conſtantine ſtill continued to Maximian the pomp and honours of the Imperial dignity; and on all public occaſions gave the righthand place to his father-in-law. Panegyr. Vet. vii. 15.

[35] Zoſim. l. ii. p. 82. Eumenius in Panegyr. Vet. vii. 16—21. The latter of theſe has undoubtedly repreſented the whole affair in the moſt favourable light for his ſovereign. Yet even from his partial narrative we may conclude, that the repeated clemency of Conſtantine, and the reiterated treaſons of Maximian, as they are deſcribed by Lactantius (de M. P. c. 29, 30.), and copied by the moderns, are deſtitute of any hiſtorical foundation.

[36] Aurelius Victor, c. 40. But that lake was ſituated on the Upper Pannonia, near the borders of Noricum; and the province of Valeria (a name which the wife of Galerius gave to the drained country) undoubtedly lay between the Drave and the Danube (Sextus Rufus, c. 9.) I ſhould therefore ſuſpect that Victor has confounded the lake Pelſo with the Volocean marches, or, as they are now called, the lake Sabaton. It is placed in the heart of Valeria, and its preſent extent is not leſs than 12 Hungarian miles (about 70 Engliſh) in length, and two in breadth. See Severini Pannonia, l. i. c. 9.

[37] Lactantius (de M. P. c. 33.) and Euſebius (l. viii. c. 16.) deſcribe the ſymptoms and progreſs of his diſorder with ſingular accuracy and apparent pleaſure.

[38] If any (like the late Dr. Jortin, Remarks on Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, vol. ii. p. 307—356.) ſtill delight in recording the wonderful deaths of the perſecutors, I would recommend to their peruſal an admirable paſſage of Grotius (Hiſt. l. vii. p. 332.) concerning the laſt illneſs of Philip II. of Spain.

[39] See Euſebius, l. ix. 6. 10. Lactantius de M. P. c. 36. Zoſimus is leſs exact, and evidently confounds Maximian with Maximin.

[40] See the viiith Panegyr. in which Eumenius diſplays, in the preſence of Conſtantine, the miſery and the gratitude of the city of Autun.

[41] Eutropius, x. 3. Panegyr. Veter. vii. 10, 11, 12. A great number of the French youth were likewiſe expoſed to the ſame cruel and ignominious death.

[42] Julian excludes Maxentius from the banquet of the Cæſars with abhorrence and contempt; and Zoſimus (l. ii. p. 85.) accuſes him of every kind of cruelty and proſtigacy.

[43] Zoſimus,

[43] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 83—85. Aurelius Victor.

[44] The paſſage of Aurelius Victor ſhould be read in the following manner. Primus inſtituto peſſimo, *munerum* ſpecie, Patres *oratoreſque* pecuniam conferre prodigenti ſibi cogeret.

[45] Panegyr. Vet. ix. 3. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. viii. 14. et in Vit. Conſtant. i. 33, 34. Rufinus, c. 17. The virtuous matron, who ſtabbed herſelf to eſcape the violence of Maxentius, was a Chriſtian, wife to the præfect of the city, and her name was Sophronia. It ſtill remains a queſtion among the caſuiſts, whether, on ſuch occaſions, ſuicide is juſtifiable.

[46] Prætorianis cædem vulgi quondam annueret, is the vague expreſſion of Aurelius Victor. See more particular, though ſomewhat different, accounts of a tumult and maſſacre, which happened at Rome, in Euſebius (l. viii. c. 14.) and in Zoſimus (l. ii. p. 84.).

[47] See in the Panegyrics (ix. 14.), a lively deſcription of the indolence and vain pride of Maxentius. In another place, the orator obſerves, that the riches which Rome had accumulated in a period of 1060 years, were laviſhed by the tyrant on his mercenary bands; redemptis ad civile latrocinium manibus ingeſſerat.

[48] After the victory of Conſtantine, it was univerſally allowed, that the motive of delivering the republic from a deteſted tyrant, would, at any time, have juſtified his expedition into Italy. Euſeb. in Vit. Conſtantin. l. i. c. 26. Panegyr. Vet. ix. 2.

[49] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 84, 85. Nazarius in Panegyr. x. 7—13.

[50] See Panegyr. Vet. ix. 2. Omnibus fere tuis Comitibus et Ducibus non ſolum tacite muſſantibus, ſed etiam aperte timentibus; contra conſilia hominum, contra Haruſpicum monita, ipſe per temet liberandæ urbis tempus veniſſe ſentires. The embaſſy of the Romans is mentioned only by Zonaras (l. xiii.) and by Cedrenus (in Compend. Hiſt. p. 270.): but thoſe modern Greeks had the opportunity of conſulting many writers which have ſince been loſt, among which we may reckon the life of Conſtantine by Praxagoras. Photius (p. 63.) has made a ſhort extract from that hiſtorical work.

[51] Zoſimus (l. ii. p. 86.) has given us this curious account of the forces on both ſides. He makes no mention of any naval armaments, though we are aſſured (Panegyr. Vet. ix. 25.) that the war was carried on by ſea as well as by land; and that the fleet of Conſtantine took poſſeſſion of Sardinia, Corſica, and the ports of Italy.

[52] Panegyr. Vet. ix. 3. It is not ſurpriſing that the orator ſhould diminiſh the numbers with which his ſovereign atchieved the conqueſt of Italy; but it appears ſomewhat ſingular, that he ſhould eſteem the tyrant's army at no more than 100,000 men.

[53] The three principal paſſages of the Alps between Gaul and Italy, are thoſe of Mount St. Bernard, Mount Cenis, and Mount Genevre. Tradition and a reſemblance of names (*Alpes Penninæ*), had aſſigned the firſt of theſe for the march of Hannibal (ſee Simler de Alpibus).

The Chevalier de Folard (Polybe, tom. iv.) and M. d'Anville have led him over Mount Genevre. But nothwithſtanding the authority of an experienced officer and a learned geographer, the pretenſions of Mount Cenis are ſupported in a ſpecious, not to ſay a convincing, manner by M. Grosley. Obſervations ſur l'Italie, tom. i. p. 40, etc.

[54] La Brunette near Suſe, Demont, Exiles, Feneſtrelles, Coni, etc.

[55] See Ammian. Marcellin. xv. 10. His deſcription of the roads over the Alps, is clear, lively, and accurate.

[56] Zoſimus as well as Euſebius haſten from the paſſage of the Alps, to the deciſive action near Rome. We muſt apply to the two Panegyrics, for the intermediate actions of Conſtantine.

[57] The Marquis Maffei has examined the ſiege and battle of Verona, with that degree of attention and accuracy, which was due to a memorable action that happened in his native country. The fortifications of that city, conſtructed by Gallienus, were leſs extenſive than the modern walls, and the Amphitheatre was not included within their circumference See Verona Illuſtrata, Part. i. p. 142. 150.

[58] They wanted chains for ſo great a multitude of captives; and the whole council was at a loſs; but the ſagacious conqueror imagined the happy expedient of converting into fetters the ſwords of the vanquished. Panegyr. Vet. ix. 11.

[59] Panegyr. Vet. ix. 10.

[60] Literas calamitatum ſuarum indices ſupprimebat. Panegyr. Vet. ix. 15.

[61] Remedia malorum potius quam mala differebat, is the fine cenſure which Tacitus paſſes on the ſupine indolence of Vitellius.

[62] The Marquis Maffei has made it extremely probable that Conſtantine was ſtill at Verona, the 1ſt of September, A. D. 312, and that the memorable æra of the indictions was dated from his conqueſt of the Ciſalpine Gaul.

[63] See Panegyr. Vet. ix. 16. Lactantius de M. P. c. 44.

[64] Illo die hoſtem Romanorum eſſe periturum. The vanquished prince became of courſe the enemy of Rome.

[65] See Panegyr. Vet. ix. 16. x. 27. The former of theſe orators magnifies the hoards of corn, which Maxentius had collected from Africa and the Islands. And yet, if there is any truth in the ſcarcity mentioned by Euſebius (in Vit. Conſtantin. l. i. c. 36.), the Imperial granaries muſt have been open only to the ſoldiers.

[66] Maxentius . . . tandem urbe in *Saxa Rubra*, millia ferme novem ægerrime progreſſus. Aurelius Victor. See Cellarius Geograph. Antiq. tom. i. p. 463. Saxa Rubra was in the neighbourhood of the Cremera, a trifling rivulet, illuſtrated by the valour and glorious death of the three hundred Fabii.

[67] The poſt which Maxentius had taken, with the Tyber in his rear, is very clearly deſcribed by the two Panegyriſts, ix. 16. x. 28.

[68] Exceptis latrocinii illius primis auctoribus, qui deſperatâ veniâ,

locum quem pugnæ ſumpſerant texere corporibus. Panegyr. Vet. ix. 17.

[69] A very idle rumour ſoon prevailed, that Maxentius, who had not taken any precaution for his own retreat, had contrived a very artful ſnare to deſtroy the army of the purſuers; but that the wooden bridge which was to have been looſened on the approach of Conſtantine, unluckily broke down under the weight of the flying Italians. M. de Tillemont (Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. iv. part. i. p. 576.) very ſeriously examines whether, in contradiction to common ſenſe, the teſtimony of Euſebius and Zoſimus ought to prevail over the ſilence of Lactantius, Nazarius, and the anonymous, but contemporary orator, who compoſed the ninth panegyric.

[70] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 86—88, and the two Panegyrics, the former of which was pronounced a few months afterwards, afford the cleareſt notion of this great battle. Lactantius, Euſebius, and even the Epitomes, ſupply ſeveral uſeful hints.

[71] Zoſimus, the enemy of Conſtantine, allows (l. ii. p. 88.), that only a few of the friends of Maxentius were put to death; but we may remark the expreſſive paſſage of Nazarius (Panegyr. Vet. x. 6), Omnibus qui labefactare ſtatum ejus poterant cum ſtirpe deletis. The other orator (Panegyr. Vet. ix. 20, 21.) contents himſelf with obſerving, that Conſtantine, when he entered Rome, did not imitate the cruel maſſacres of Cinna, of Marius, or of Sylla.

[72] See the two Panegyrics, and the laws of this and the enſuing year, in the Theodoſian Code.

[73] Panegyr. Vet. ix. 20. Lactantius de M. P. c. 44. Maximin, who was confeſſedly the eldeſt Cæſar, claimed, with ſome ſhew of reaſon, the firſt rank among the Auguſti.

[74] Adhuc cuncta opera quæ magnifice conſtruxerat, urbis fanum, atque baſilicam, Flavii meritis patres ſacravere. Aurelius Victor. With regard to the theft of Trajan's trophies, conſult Flaminius Vacca, apud Montfaucon, Diarium Italicum, p. 250, and l'Antiquité Expliquée of the latter, tom. iv. p. 171.

[75] Prætoriæ legiones ac ſubſidia factionibus aptiora quam urbi Romæ, ſublata penitus; ſimul arma atque uſus indumenti militaris. Aurelius Victor. Zoſimus (l. ii. p. 89.) mentions this fact as an hiſtorian; and it is very pompouſly celebrated in the ninth Panegyric.

[76] Ex omnibus provinciis optimates viros Curiæ tuæ pigneraveris; ut Senatûs dignitas .... ex totius Orbis flore conſiſteret. Nazarius in Panegyr. Vet. x. 35. The word *pigneraveris* might almoſt ſeem maliciously choſen. Concerning the ſenatorial tax, ſee Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 115. the ſecond title of the ſixth book of the Theodoſian code, with Godefroy's Commentary, and Mémoires de l'Académie des Inſcriptions, tom. xxviii. p. 726.

[77] From the Theodoſian Code, we may now begin to trace the motions of the emperors; but the dates both of time and place have frequently been altered by the careleſſneſs of tranſcribers.

[78] Zoſimus (l. ii. p. 89.) obſerves, that before the war, the ſiſter of Conſtantine had been betrothed to Licinius. According to the younger Victor, Diocletian was invited to the nuptials; but having ventured to plead his age and infirmities, he received a ſecond letter filled with reproaches for his ſuppoſed partiality to the cauſe of Maxentius and Maximin.

[79] Zoſimus mentions the defeat and death of Maximin as ordinary events: but Lactantius expatiates on them (de M. P. c. 45—50.), aſcribing them to the miraculous interpoſition of Heaven. Licinius at that time was one of the protectors of the church.

[80] Lactantius de M. P. c. 50. Aurelius Victor touches on the different conduct of Licinius, and of Conſtantine, in the uſe of victory.

[81] The ſenſual appetites of Maximin were gratified at the expence of his ſubjects. His eunuchs, who forced away wives and virgins, examined their naked charms with anxious curioſity, leſt any part of their body ſhould be found unworthy of the royal embraces. Coyneſs and diſdain were conſidered as treaſon, and the obſtinate fair one was condemned to be drowned. A cuſtom was gradually introduced, that no perſon ſhould marry a wife without the permiſſion of the emperor, "ut ipſe in omnibus nuptiis præguſtator eſſet." Lactantius de M. P. c. 38.

[82] Lactantius de M. P. c. 39.

[83] Diocletian at laſt ſent cognatum ſuum, quendam militarem ac potentem virum, to intercede in favour of his daughter (Lactantius de M. P. c. 41.). We are not ſufficiently acquainted with the hiſtory of theſe times, to point out the perſon who was employed.

[84] Valeria quoque per varias provincias quindecim menſibus plebeio cultû pervagata. Lactantius de M. P. c. 51. There is ſome doubt whether we ſhould compute the fifteen months from the moment of her exile, or from that of her eſcape. The expreſſion of *pervagata* ſeems to denote the latter; but in that caſe we muſt ſuppoſe, that the treatiſe of Lactantius was written after the firſt civil war between Licinius and Conſtantine. See Cuper, p. 254.

[85] Ita illis pudicitia et conditio exitio fuit. Lactantius de M. P. c. 51. He relates the misfortunes of the innocent wife and daughter of Diocletian with a very natural mixture of pity and exultation.

[86] The curious reader, who conſults the Valeſian Fragment, p. 713, will perhaps accuſe me of giving a bold and licentious paraphraſe; but if he conſiders it with attention, he will acknowledge that my interpretation is probable and conſiſtent.

[87] The ſituation of Æmona, or, as it is now called, Laybach, in Carniola (d'Anville Géographie Ancienne, tom. i. p. 187.), may ſuggeſt a conjecture. As it lay to the north-eaſt of the Julian Alps, that important territory became a natural object of diſpute between the ſovereigns of Italy and of Illyricum.

[88] Cibalis or Cibalæ (whoſe name is ſtill preſerved in the obſcure

ruins of Swilei) was ſituated about fifty miles from Sirmium, the capital of Illyricum, and about one hundred from Taurunum, or Belgrade, and the conflux of the Danube and the Save. The Roman garriſons and cities on thoſe rivers are finely illuſtrated by M. d'Anville, in a memoir inſerted in l'Académie des Inſcriptions, tom. xxviii.

[89] Zoſimus (l. ii. p. 90, 91.) gives a very particular account of this battle; but the deſcriptions of Zoſimus are rhetorical rather than military.

[90] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 92, 93. Anonym. Valeſian. p. 713. The Epitomes furniſh ſome circumſtances; but they frequently confound the two wars between Licinius and Conſtantine.

[91] Petrus Patricius in Excerpt. Legat. p. 27. If it ſhould be thought that γαμβρος ſignifies more properly a ſon-in-law, we might conjecture, that Conſtantine, aſſuming the name as well as the duties of a father, had adopted his younger brothers and ſiſters, the children of Theodora. But in the beſt authors γαμβρος ſometimes ſignifies a husband, ſometimes a father-in-law, and ſometimes a kinſman in general. See Spanheim Obſervat. ad Julian. Orat. i. p. 72.

[92] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 93. Anonym. Valeſian. p. 713. Eutropius, x. 5. Aurelius Victor, Euſeb. in Chron. Sozomen, l. i. c. 2. Four of theſe writers affirm that the promotion of the Cæſars was an article of the treaty. It is however certain, that the younger Conſtantine and Licinius were not yet born; and it is highly probable that the promotion was made the 1ſt of March, A. D. 317. The treaty had probably ſtipulated that two Cæſars might be created by the weſtern, and one only by the eaſtern emperor; but each of them reſerved to himſelf the choice of the perſons.

[93] Codex Theodoſian. l. xi. tit. 27. tom. iv. p. 188. with Godefroy's obſervations. See likewiſe, l. v. tit. 7—8.

[94] Omnia foris placita, domi proſpera, annonæ ubertate, fructuum copiâ, etc. Panegyr. Vet. x. 38. This oration of Nazarius was pronounced on the day of the Quinquennalia of the Cæſars, the 1ſt of March, A. D. 321.

[95] See the edict of Conſtantine, addreſſed to the Roman people, in the Theodoſian Code, l. ix. tit. 24. tom. iii. p. 189.

[96] His ſon very fairly aſſigns the true reaſon of the repeal, "Ne "ſub ſpecie atrocioris judicii aliqua in ulciſcendo crimine dilatio naſ-"ceretur." Cod. Theod. tom. iii. p. 193.

[97] Euſebius (in Vitâ Conſtant. l. iii. c. 1.) chooſes to affirm, that in the reign of his hero, the ſword of juſtice hung idle in the hands of the magiſtrates. Euſebius himſelf (l. iv. c. 29. 54.) and the Theodoſian Code will inform us, that this exceſſive lenity was not owing to the want either of atrocious criminals or of penal laws.

[98] Nazarius in Panegyr. Vet. x. The victory of Criſpus over the Alemanni, is expreſſed on ſome medals.

[99] See Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 93, 94; though the narrative of that hiſtorian

is neither clear nor conſiſtent. The Panegyric of Optatianus (c. 23.) mentions the alliance of the Sarmatians with the Carpi and Getæ, and points out the ſeveral fields of battle. It is ſuppoſed, that the Sarmatian games, celebrated in the month of November, derived their origin from the ſucceſs of this war.

[100] In the Cæſars of Julian (p. 329. Commentaire de Spanheim, p. 252.) Conſtantine boaſts, that he had recovered the province (Dacia) which Trajan had ſubdued. But it is inſinuated by Silenus, that the conqueſts of Conſtantine were like the gardens of Adonis, which fade and wither almoſt the moment they appear.

[101] Jornandes de Rebus Geticis, c. 21. I know not whether we may entirely depend on his authority. Such an alliance has a very recent air, and ſcarcely is ſuited to the maxims of the beginning of the fourth century.

[102] Euſebius in Vit. Conſtantin. l. i. c. 8. This paſſage, however, is taken from a general declamation on the greatneſs of Conſtantine, and not from any particular account of the Gothic war.

[103] Conſtantinus tamen, vir ingens, et omnia efficere nitens quæ animo præparaſſet, ſimul principatum totius orbis affectans, Licinio bellum intulit. Eutropius, x. 5. Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 89. The reaſons which they have aſſigned for the firſt civil war may, with more propriety, be applied to the ſecond.

[104] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 94, 95.

[105] Conſtantine was very attentive to the privileges and comforts of his fellow-veterans (Conveterani), as he now began to ſtyle them. See the Theodoſian Code, l. vii. tit. 20. tom. ii. p. 419. 429.

[106] Whilſt the Athenians maintained the empire of the ſea, their fleet conſiſted of three, and afterwards of four, hundred gallies of three ranks of oars, all completely equipped and ready for immediate ſervice. The arſenal in the port of Piræus had coſt the republic a thouſand talents, about two hundred and ſixteen thouſand pounds. See Thucydides de Bel. Peloponn. l. ii. c. 13. and Meurſius de Fortuna Attica, c. 19.

[107] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 95, 96. This great battle is deſcribed in the Valeſian fragment (p. 714.) in a clear though conciſe manner. "Licinius vero circum Hadrianopolin maximo exercitu latera arduſ montis impleverat; illuc toto agmine Conſtantinus inflexit. Cum bellum terrâ marique traheretur, quamvis per arduum ſuis nitentibus, attamen diſciplinâ militari et felicitate, Conſtantinus Licinii confuſum et ſine ordine agentem vicit exercitum; leviter femore fauciatus."

[108] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 97, 98. The current always ſets out of the Helleſpont; and when it is aſſiſted by a north wind, no veſſel can attempt the paſſage. A ſouth wind renders the force of the current almoſt imperceptible. See Tournefort's Voyage au Levant, Let. xi.

[109] Aurelius Victor. Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 98. According to the latter, Martinianus was Magiſter Officiorum (he uſes the Latin appellation in

Greek). Some medals ſeem to intimate, that during his ſhort reign he received the title of Auguſtus.

[110] Euſebius (in Vitâ Conſtantin. l. ii. c. 16, 17.) aſcribes this deciſive victory to the pious prayers of the emperor. The Valeſian fragment (p. 714.) mentions a body of Gothic auxiliaries, under their chief Aliquaca, who adhered to the party of Licinius.

[111] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 102. Victor Junior in Epitome. Anonym. Valeſian. p. 714.

[112] Contra religionem ſacramenti Theſſalonicæ privatus occiſus eſt. Eutropius, x. 6. and his evidence is confirmed by Jerome (in Chronic.) as well as by Zoſimus, l. ii p. 102. The Valeſian writer is the only one who mentions the ſoldiers, and it is Zonaras alone who calls in the aſſiſtance of the ſenate. Euſebius prudently ſlides over this delicate tranſaction. But Sozomen, a century afterwards, ventures to aſſert the treaſonable practices of Licinius.

[113] See the Theodoſian Code, l. ix. tit. ix. tom. v. p. 404, 405. Theſe edicts of Conſtantine betray a degree of paſſion and precipitancy very unbecoming of the character of a lawgiver.

CHAP. XV.

[1] Dum Aſſyrios penes, Medoſque, et Perſas Oriens fuit, deſpectiſſima pars ſervientium. Tacit. Hiſt. v. 8. Herodotus, who viſited Aſia whilſt it obeyed the laſt of thoſe empires, ſlightly mentions the Syrians of Paleſtine, who, according to their own confeſſion, had received from Egypt the rite of circumciſion. See l. ii. c. 104.

[2] Diodorus Siculus, l. xl. Dion Caſſius, l. xxxvii. p. 121. Tacit. Hiſt. v. 1—9. Juſtin, xxxvi. 2, 3.

[3] Tradidit arcano quæcunque volumine Moſes,
Non monſtrare vias eadem niſi ſacra colenti,
Quæſitos ad fontes ſolos deducere verpas.

The letter of this law is not to be found in the preſent volume of Moſes. But the wiſe, the humane Maimonides openly teaches, that if an idolater fall into the water, a Jew ought not to ſave him from inſtant death. See Baſnage, Hiſtoire des Juifs, l. vi. c. 28.

[4] A Jewiſh ſect, which indulged themſelves in a ſort of occaſional conformity, derived from Herod, by whoſe example and authority they had been ſeduced, the name of Herodians. But their numbers were ſo inconſiderable, and their duration ſo ſhort, that Joſephus has not thought them worthy of his notice. See Prideaux's Connection, vol. ii. p. 285.

[5] Cicero pro Flacco, c. 28.

[6] Philo de Legatione. Auguſtus left a foundation for a perpetual ſacrifice. Yet he approved of the neglect which his grandſon Caius expreſſed towards the temple of Jeruſalem. See Sueton. in Auguſt. c. 93. and Caſaubon's notes on that paſſage.

[7] See, in particular, Joſeph. Antiquitat. xvii. 6. xviii. 3. and De Bel. Judaic. i. 33. and ii. 9. Edit. Havercamp.

[8] Juſſi a Caio Cæſare, effigiem ejus in templo locare arma potius ſumpſere. Tacit. Hiſt. v. 9. Philo and Joſephus gave a very circumſtantial, but a very rhetorical, account of this tranſaction, which exceedingly perplexed the governor of Syria. At the firſt mention of this idolatrous propoſal. King Agrippa fainted away; and did not recover his ſenſes till the third day,

[9] For the enumeration of the Syrian and Arabian deities, it may be obſerved, that Milton has compriſed in one hundred and thirty very beautiful lines, the two large and learned ſyntagmas, which Selden had compoſed on that abſtruſe ſubject.

[10] "How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be "ere they *believe* me, for all the *ſigns* which I have ſhewn among "them?" Numbers, xiv. 11.) It would be eaſy, but it would be unbecoming, to juſtify the complaint of the Deity from the whole tenor of the Moſaic hiſtory.

[11] All that relates to the Jewiſh proſelytes has been very ably treated by Baſnage, Hiſt. des Juifs, l. vi. c. 6, 7.

[12] See Exod. xxiv. 23. Deut. xvi. 16. the commentators, and a very ſenſible note in the Univerſal Hiſtory, vol. i. p. 603 edit. fol.

[13] When Pompey, uſing or abuſing the right of conqueſt, entered into the Holy of Holies, it was obſerved with amazement, "Nulla "intus Deûm effigie, vacuam ſedem et inania arcana." Tacit. Hiſt. v. 9. It was a popular ſaying, with regard to the Jews,

Nil præter nubes et cœli numen adorant.

[14] A ſecond kind of circumciſion was inflicted on a Samaritan or Egyptian proſelyte. The ſullen indifference of the Thalmudiſts, with reſpect to the converſion of ſtrangers, may be ſeen in Baſnage, Hiſtoire des Juifs, l. vi. c. 6.

[15] Theſe arguments were urged with great ingenuity by the Jew Orobio, and refuted with equal ingenuity and candour by the Chriſtian Limborch. See the Amica Collatio (it well deſerves that name), or account of the diſpute between them.

[16] Jeſus - - - circumciſus erat; cibis utebatur Judaicis; veſtitû ſimili; purgatos ſcabie mittebat ad ſacerdotes; Paſchata et alios dies feſtos religioſe obſervabat: Si quos ſanavit ſabatho, oſtendit non tantum ex lege, ſed et ex receptis ſententiis talia opera ſabatho non interdicta. Grotius de veritate Religionis Chriſtianæ, l. v. c. 7. A little afterwards (c. 12.), he expatiates on the condeſcenſion of the apoſtles.

[17] Pæne omnes Chriſtum Deum ſub legis obſervatione credebant. Sulpicius Severus, ii. 31. See Euſebius, Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. iv. c. 5.

[18] Mosheim de Rebus Chriſtianis ante Conſtantinum Magnum, p. 153. In this maſterly performance, which I ſhall often have occaſion to quote, he enters much more fully into the ſtate of the primitive church, than he has an opportunity of doing in his General Hiſtory.

[19] Eusebius, l. iii. c. 5. Le Clerc, Hist. Ecclesiast. p. 605. During this occasional absence, the bishop and church of Pella still retained the title of Jerusalem. In the same manner, the Roman pontiffs resided seventy years at Avignon; and the patriarchs of Alexandria have long since transferred their episcopal seat to Cairo.

[20] Dion Cassius, l. lxix. The exile of the Jewish nation from Jerusalem is attested by Aristo of Pella (apud Euseb. l. iv. c. 6.), and is mentioned by several ecclesiastical writers; though some of them too hastily extend this interdiction to the whole country of Palestine.

[21] Eusebius, l. iv. c. 6. Sulpicius Severus, ii. 31. By comparing their unsatisfactory accounts, Mosheim (p. 327, etc.) has drawn out a very distinct representation of the circumstances and motives of this revolution.

[22] Le Clerc. (Hist. Ecclesiast. p. 477. 535.) seems to have collected from Eusebius, Jerome, Epiphanius, and other writers, all the principal circumstances that relate to the Nazarenes or Ebionites. The nature of their opinions soon divided them into a stricter and a milder sect; and there is some reason to conjecture, that the family of Jesus Christ remained members, at least, of the latter and more moderate party.

[23] Some writers have been pleased to create an Ebion, the imaginary author of their sect and name. But we can more safely rely on the learned Eusebius than on the vehement Tertullian, or the credulous Epiphanius. According to Le Clerc, the Hebrew word *Ebjonim* may be translated into Latin by that of *Pauperes*. See Hist. Ecclesiast. p. 477.

[24] See the very curious Dialogue of Justin Martyr with the Jew Tryphon. The conference between them was held at Ephesus, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, and about twenty years after the return of the church of Pella to Jerusalem. For this date consult the accurate note of Tillemont, Mémoires Eccléfiastiques, tom. ii. p. 511.

[25] Of all the systems of Christianity, that of Abyssinia is the only one which still adheres to the Mosaic rites (Gedde's Church History of Æthiopia, and Dissertations de le Grand sur la Relation du P. Lobo). The eunuch of the queen Candace might suggest some suspicions; but as we are assured (Socrates, i. 19. Sozomen, ii. 24. Ludolphus, p. 281.), that the Æthiopians were not converted till the fourth century; it is more reasonable to believe, that they respected the Sabbath, and distinguished the forbidden meats, in imitation of the Jews, who, in a very early period, were seated on both sides of the Red Sea. Circumcision had been practised by the most ancient Æthiopians, from motives of health and cleanliness, which seem to be explained in the Recherches Philosophiques sur les Américains, tom. ii. p. 117.

[26] Beausobre, Histoire du Manichéisme, l. i. c. 3. has stated their objections, particularly those of Faustus, the adversary of Augustin, with the most learned impartiality.

[27] Apud ipsos fides obstinata, misericordia in promptu: adversus

omnes alios hoſtile odium. Tacit. Hiſt. v. 4. Surely Tacitus had ſeen the Jews with too favourable an eye. The peruſal of Joſephus muſt have deſtroyed the antitheſis.

[28] Dr. Burnet (Archæologia, l. ii. c. 7.) has diſcuſſed the firſt chapters of Geneſis with too much wit and freedom.

[29] The milder Gnoſtics conſidered Jehovah, the Creator, as a Being of a mixed nature between God and the Dæmon. Others confounded him with the evil principle. Conſult the ſecond century of the general hiſtory of Mosheim, which gives a very diſtinct, though concife, account of their ſtrange opinions on this ſubject.

[30] See Beauſobre, Hiſt. du Manichéiſme, l. i. c. 4. Origen and St. Auguſtin were among the Allegoriſts.

[31] Hegeſippus, ap. Euſeb. l. iii. 32. iv. 22. Clemens Alexandrin. Stromat. vii. 17.

[32] In the account of the Gnoſtics of the ſecond and third centuries, Mosheim is ingenious and candid; Le Clerc dull, but exact; Beauſobre almoſt always an apologiſt; and it is much to be feared, that the primitive fathers are very frequently calumniators.

[33] See the catalogues of Irenæus and Epiphanius. It muſt indeed be allowed, that thoſe writers were inclined to multiply the number of ſects which oppoſed the *unity* of the church.

[34] Euſebius, l. iv. c. 15. Sozomen, l. ii. c. 32. See in Bayle, in the article of *Marcion*, a curious detail of a diſpute on that ſubject. It ſhould ſeem that ſome of the Gnoſtics (the Baſilidians) declined, and even refuſed, the honour of martyrdom. Their reaſons were ſingular and abſtruſe. See Mosheim, p. 359.

[35] See a very remarkable paſſage of Origen (Proem. ad Lucan.). That indefatigable writer, who had conſumed his life in the ſtudy of the ſcriptures, relies for their authenticity on the inſpired authority of the church. It was impoſſible that the Gnoſtics could receive our preſent goſpels, many parts of which (particularly in the reſurrection of Chriſt are directly, and as it might ſeem deſignedly, pointed againſt their favourite tenets. It is therefore ſomewhat ſingular that Ignatius (Epiſt. ad Smyrn. Patr. Apoſtol. tom. ii. p. 34.) ſhould chuſe to employ a vague and doubtful tradition, inſtead of quoting the certain teſtimony of the evangeliſts.

[36] Faciunt favos et veſpæ; faciunt eccleſias et Marcionitæ, is the ſtrong expreſſion of Tertullian, which I am obliged to quote from memory. In the time of Epiphanius (adverſ. Hæreſes, p. 302.) the Marcionites were very numerous in Italy, Syria, Egypt, Arabia, and Perſia.

[37] Auguſtin is a memorable inſtance of this gradual progreſs from reaſon to faith. He was, during ſeveral years, engaged in the Manichæan ſect.

[38] The unanimous ſentiment of the primitive church is very clearly explained by Juſtin. Martyr. Apolog. Major, by Athenagoras Legat. c. 22, etc. and by Lactantius, Inſtitut. Divin. ii. 14—19.

[39] Tertullian (Apolog. c. 23.) alleges the confeſſion of the Dæmons themſelves as often as they were tormented by the Chriſtian exorciſts.

[40] Tertullian has written a moſt ſevere treatiſe againſt idolatry, to caution his brethren againſt the hourly danger of incurring that guilt. Recogita ſylvam, et quantæ latitant ſpinæ. De Coronâ Militis, c. 10.

[41] The Roman ſenate was always held in a temple or conſecrated place (Aulus Gellius, xiv. 7.). Before they entered on buſineſs, every ſenator dropt ſome wine and frankincenſe on the altar. Sueton. in Auguſt. c. 35.

[42] See Tertullian, De Spectaculis. This ſevere reformer ſhews no more indulgence to a tragedy of Euripides, than to a combat of gladiators. The dreſs of the actors particularly offends him. By the uſe of the lofty buskin, they impiously ſtrive to add a cubit to their ſtature, c. 23.

[43] The ancient practice of concluding the entertainment with libations, may be found in every claſſic. Socrates and Seneca, in their laſt moments, made a noble application of this cuſtom. Poſtquam ſtagnum calidæ aquæ introiit, reſpergens proximos ſervorum, additâ voce, libare ſe liquorem illum Jovi Liberatori. Tacit. Annal. xv. 64.

[44] See the elegant but idolatrous hymn of Catullus, on the nuptials of Manlius and Julia. O Hymen, Hymenæe Iö! Quis huic Deo compararier auſit?

[45] The ancient funerals (in thoſe of Miſenus and Pallas) are no leſs accurately deſcribed by Virgil, than they are illuſtrated by his commentator Servius. The pile itſelf was an altar, the flames were fed with the blood of victims, and all the aſſiſtants were ſprinkled with luſtral water.

[46] Tertullian de Idololatria, c. 11.

[47] See every part of Montfaucon's Antiquities. Even the reverſes of the Greek and Roman coins were frequently of an idolatrous nature. Here indeed the ſcruples of the Chriſtian were ſuſpended by a ſtronger paſſion.

[48] Tertullian de Idololatria, c. 20, 21, 22. If a Pagan friend (on the occaſion perhaps of ſneezing) uſed the familiar expreſſion of "Jupiter bleſs you," the Chriſtian was obliged to proteſt againſt the divinity of Jupiter.

[49] Conſult the moſt laboured work of Ovid, his imperfect *Faſti*. He finiſhed no more than the firſt ſix months of the year. The compilation of Macrobius is called the *Saturnalia*, but it is only a ſmall part of the firſt book that bears any relation to the title.

[50] Tertullian has compoſed a defence, or rather panegyric, of the raſh action of a Chriſtian ſoldier, who, by throwing away his crown of laurel, had expoſed himſelf and his brethren to the moſt imminent danger. By the mention of the *emperors* (Severus and Caracalla) it is evident, notwithſtanding the wiſhes of M. de Tillemont, that Tertullian compoſed his treatiſe De Coronâ, long before he was engaged in the errors of the Montaniſts. See Mémoires Eccléſiaſtiques, tom. iii. p. 384.

[51] In particular, the firſt book of the Tuſculan Queſtions, and the treatiſe De Senectute, and the Somnium Scipionis, contain, in the moſt beautiful language, every thing that Grecian philoſophy, or Roman good ſenſe, could poſſibly ſuggeſt on this dark but important object.

[52] The pre-exiſtence of human ſouls, ſo far at leaſt as that doctrine is compatible with religion, was adopted by many of the Greek and Latin fathers. See Beauſobre, Hiſt. du Manicheiſme, l. vi. c. 4.

[53] See Cicero pro Cluent. c. 61. Cæſar ap. Salluſt. de Bell. Catilin. c. 50. Juvenal. Satir. ii. 149.

Eſſe aliquos manes, et ſubterranea regna,

. . . . . .

Nec pueri credunt, niſi qui nondum æra lavantur.

[54] The xith book of the Odyſſey gives a very dreary and incoherent account of the infernal ſhades. Pindar and Virgil have embellished the picture; but even thoſe poets, though more correct than their great model, are guilty of very ſtrange inconſiſtencies. See Bayle, Réponſes aux Queſtions d'un Provincial, part. iii. c. 22.

[55] See the xvith epiſtle of the firſt book of Horace, the xiiith Satire of Juvenal, and the iid Satire of Perſius: theſe popular diſcourſes expreſs the ſentiment and language of the multitude.

[56] If we confine ourſelves to the Gauls, we may obſerve, that they intruſted, not only their lives, but even their money, to the ſecurity of another world. Vetus ille mos Gallorum occurrit (ſays Valerius Maximus, l. ii. c. 6. p. 10.), quos memoria proditum eſt, pecunias mutuas, quæ his apud inferos redderentur, dare ſolitos. The ſame cuſtom is more darkly inſinuated by Mela, l. iii. c. 2. It is almoſt needleſs to add, that the profits of trade hold a juſt proportion to the credit of the merchant, and that the Druids derived from their holy profeſſion a character of reſponſibility, which could ſcarcely be claimed by any other order of men.

[57] The right reverend author of the Divine Legation of Moſes aſſigns a very curious reaſon for the omiſſion, and moſt ingeniously retorts it on the unbelievers.

[58] See Le Clerc (Prolegomena ad Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. ſect. 1. c. 8.). His authority ſeems to carry the greater weight, as he has written a learned and judicious commentary on the books of the Old Teſtament.

[59] Joſeph. Antiquitat. l. xiii. c. 10. De Bell. Jud. ii. 8. According to the moſt natural interpretation of his words, the Sadducees admitted only the Pentateuch; but it has pleaſed ſome modern critics to add the prophets to their creed, and to ſuppoſe, that they contented themſelves with rejecting the traditions of the Phariſees. Dr. Jortin has argued that point in his Remarks on Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, vol. ii. p. 103.

[60] This expectation was countenanced by the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew, and by the firſt epiſtle of St. Paul to the Theſſalonians.

Eraſmus removes the difficulty by the help of allegory and metaphor; and the learned Grotius ventures to inſinuate, that, for wiſe purpoſes, the pious deception was permitted to take place.

[61] See Burnet's Sacred Theory, part iii. c. 5. This tradition may be traced as high as the author of the Epiſtle of Barnabas, who wrote in the firſt century, and who ſeems to have been half a Jew.

[62] The primitive church of Antioch computed almoſt 6000 years from the creation of the world to the birth of Chriſt. Africanus, Lactantius, and the Greek church, have reduced that number to 5500, and Euſebius has contented himſelf with 5200 years. Theſe calculations were formed on the Septuagint, which was univerſally received during the ſix firſt centuries. The authority of the Vulgate and of the Hebrew text has determined the moderns, Proteſtants as well as Catholics, to prefer a period of about 4000 years; though, in the ſtudy of profane antiquity, they often find themſelves ſtreightened by thoſe narrow limits.

[63] Moſt of theſe pictures were borrowed from a miſinterpretation of Iſaiah, Daniel, and the Apocalypſe. One of the groſſeſt images may be found in Irenæus (l. v. p. 455.), the diſciple of Papias, who had ſeen the apoſtle St. John.

[64] See the ſecond dialogue of Juſtin with Tryphon, and the ſeventh book of Lactantius. It is unneceſſary to allege all the intermediate fathers, as the fact is not diſputed. Yet the curious reader may conſult Daillè de Uſu Patrum, l. ii. c. 4.

[65] The teſtimony of Juſtin, of his own faith and that of his orthodox brethren, in the doctrine of a Millennium, is delivered in the cleareſt and moſt ſolemn manner (Dialog. cum Tryphonte Jud. p. 177, 178. Edit. Benedictin.). If in the beginning of this important paſſage there is any thing like an inconſiſtency, we may impute it, as we think proper, either to the author or to his tranſcribers.

[66] Dupin, Bibliothéque Eccléſiaſtique, tom. i. p. 223. tom. ii. p. 366. and Moſheim, p. 720; though the latter of theſe learned divines is not altogether candid on this occaſion.

[67] In the council of Laodicea (about the year 360) the Apocalypſe was tacitly excluded from the ſacred canon, by the ſame churches of Aſia to which it is addreſſed; and we may learn from the complaint of Sulpicius Severus, that their ſentence had been ratified by the greater number of Chriſtians of his time. From what cauſes then is the Apocalypſe at preſent ſo generally received by the Greek, the Roman, and the Proteſtant churches? The following ones may be aſſigned. 1. The Greeks were ſubdued by the authority of an impoſtor, who, in the ſixth century, aſſumed the character of Dionyſius the Areopagite. 2. A juſt apprehenſion, that the grammarians might become more important than the theologians, engaged the council of Trent to fix the ſeal of their infallibility on all the books of Scripture, contained in the Latin Vulgate, in the number of which the Apocalypſe was

fortunately included. (Fra Paolo, Iſtoria del Concilio Tridentino, l. ii.) 3. The advantage of turning thoſe myſterious prophecies againſt the See of Rome, inſpired the proteſtants with uncommon veneration for ſo uſeful an ally. See the ingenious and elegant diſcourſes of the preſent bishop of Litchfield on that unpromiſing ſubject.

[68] Lactantius (Inſtitut. Divin. vii. 15, etc.) relates the diſmal tale of futurity with great ſpirit and eloquence.

[69] On this ſubject every reader of taſte will be entertained with the third part of Burnet's Sacred Theory. He blends philoſophy, ſcripture, and tradition, into one magnificent ſyſtem; in the deſcription of which, he diſplays a ſtrength of fancy not inferior to that of Milton himſelf.

[70] And yet whatever may be the language of individuals, it is ſtill the public doctrine of all the Chriſtian churches; nor can even our own refuſe to admit the concluſions which muſt be drawn from the viiith and the xviiith of her Articles. The Janſeniſts, who have ſo diligently ſtudied the works of the fathers, maintain this ſentiment with diſtinguiſhed zeal, and the learned M. de Tillemont never diſmiſſes a virtuous emperor without pronouncing his damnation. Zuinglius is perhaps the only leader of a party who has ever adopted the milder ſentiment, and he gave no leſs offence to the Lutherans than to the Catholics. See Boſſuet, Hiſtoire des Variations des Egliſes Proteſtantes, l. ii. c. 19—22.

[71] Juſtin and Clemens of Alexandria allow that ſome of the philoſophers were inſtructed by the Logos; confounding its double ſignification, of the human reaſon, and of the Divine Word.

[72] Tertullian, De Spectaculis, c. 30. In order to aſcertain the degree of authority which the zealous African had acquired, it may be ſufficient to allege the teſtimony of Cyprian, the doctor and guide of all the weſtern churches. (See Prudent. Hymn. xiii. 100.) As often as he applied himſelf to his daily ſtudy of the writings of Tertullian, he was accuſtomed to ſay, "*Da mihi magiſtrum*; Give me my maſter." (Hieronym. de Viris Illuſtribus, tom. i. p. 284.)

[73] Notwithſtanding the evaſions of Dr. Middleton, it is impoſſible to overlook the clear traces of viſions and inſpiration, which may be found in the apoſtolic fathers.

[74] Irenæus adv. Hæreſ. Proem. p 3. Dr. Middleton (Free Inquiry, p. 96, etc.) obſerves, that as this pretenſion of all others was the moſt difficult to ſupport by art, it was the ſooneſt given up. The obſervation ſuits his hypotheſis.

[75] Athenagoras in Legatione. Juſtin Martyr, Cohort. ad Gentes. Tertullian adverſ. Marcionit. l. iv. Theſe deſcriptions are not very unlike the prophetic fury, for which Cicero (de Divinat. ii. 54.) expreſſes ſo little reverence.

[76] Tertullian (Apolog. c. 23.) throws out a bold defiance to the

Pagan magiſtrates. Of the primitive miracles, the power of exorciſing, is the only one which has been aſſumed by Proteſtants.

[77] Irenæus adv. Hæreſes, l. ii. 56, 57. l. v. c. 6. Mr. Dodwell (Diſſert. ad Irenæum, ii. 42.) concludes, that the ſecond century was ſtill more fertile in miracles than the firſt.

[78] Theophilus ad Autolycum, l. i. p. 345. Edit. Benedictin. Paris, 1742.

[79] Dr. Middleton ſent out his Introduction in the year 1747, publiſhed his Free Inquiry in 1749, and before his death, which happened in 1750, he had prepared a vindication of it againſt his numerous adverſaries.

[80] The univerſity of Oxford conferred degrees on his opponents. From the indignation of Mosheim (p. 221.), we may diſcover the ſentiments of the Lutheran divines.

[81] It may ſeem ſomewhat remarkable, that Bernard of Clairvaux, who records ſo many miracles of his friend St. Malachi, never takes any notice of his own, which, in their turn, however, are carefully related by his companions and diſciples. In the long ſeries of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, does there exiſt a ſingle inſtance of a ſaint, aſſerting that he himſelf poſſeſſed the gift of miracles?

[82] The converſion of Conſtantine is the æra which is moſt uſually fixed by proteſtants. The more rational divines are unwilling to admit the miracles of the ivth, whilſt the more credulous are unwilling to reject thoſe of the vth century.

[83] The imputations of Celſus and Julian, with the defence of the fathers, are very fairly ſtated by Spanheim, Commentaire ſur les Céſars de Julien, p. 468.

[84] Plin. Epiſt. x. 97.

[85] Tertullian, Apolog. c. 44. He adds, however, with ſome degree of heſitation, "Aut ſi aliud, jam non Chriſtianus."

[86] The philoſopher Peregrinus (of whoſe life and death Lucian has left us ſo entertaining an account) impoſed, for a long time, on the credulous ſimplicity of the Chriſtians of Aſia.

[87] See a very judicious treatiſe of Barbeyrac ſur la Morale des Pères.

[88] Lactant. Inſtitut. Divin. l. vi. c. 20, 21, 22.

[89] Conſult a work of Clemens of Alexandria, intitled the Pædagogue, which contains the rudiments of ethics, as they were taught in the moſt celebrated of the Chriſtian ſchools.

[90] Tertullian, de Spectaculis, c. 23. Clemens Alexandrin. Pædagog. l. iii. c. 8.

[91] Beauſobre, Hiſt. Critique du Manichéiſme, l. vii. c. 3. Juſtin, Gregory of Nyſſa, Auguſtin, etc. ſtrongly inclined to this opinion.

[92] Some of the Gnoſtic heretics were more conſiſtent; they rejected the uſe of marriage.

[93] See a chain of tradition, from Juſtin Martyr to Jerome, in the Morale des Pères, c. iv. 6—26.

[94] See a very curious Diſſertation on the Veſtals, in the Mémoires de l'Académie des Inſcriptions, tom. iv p. 161——227. Notwithſtanding the honours and rewards which were beſtowed on thoſe virgins, it was difficult to procure a ſufficient number; nor could the dread of the moſt horrible death always reſtrain their incontinence.

[95] Cupiditatem procreandi aut unam ſcimus aut nullam. Minucius Fælix, c. 31. Juſtin. Apolog. Major. Athenagoras in Legat. c. 28. Tertullian. de Cultu Fœmin. l. ii.

[96] Euſebius, l. vi. 8. Before the fame of Origin had excited envy and perſecution, this extraordinary action was rather admired than cenſured. As it was his general practice to allegorize ſcripture; it ſeems unfortunate that, in this inſtance only, he ſhould have adopted the literal ſenſe.

[97] Cyprian. Epiſt. 4. and Dodwell Diſſertat. Cyprianic. iii. Something like this raſh attempt was long afterwards imputed to the founder of the order of Fontevrault. Bayle has amuſed himſelf and his readers on that very delicate ſubject.

[98] Dupin (Bibliothéque Eccléſiaſtique, tom. i. p. 195.) gives a particular account of the dialogue of the ten virgins, as it was compoſed by Methodius, biſhop of Tyre. The praiſes of virginity are exceſſive.

[99] The Aſcetics (as early as the ſecond century) made a public profeſſion of mortifying their bodies, and of abſtaining from the uſe of flesh and wine. Mosheim, p. 310.

[100] See the Morale des Pères. The ſame patient principles have been revived ſince the Reformation by the Socinians, the modern Anabaptiſts, and the Quakers. Barclay, the apologiſt of the Quakers, has protected his brethren, by the authority of the primitive Chriſtians, p. 542——549.

[101] Tertullian, Apolog. c. 21. De Idololatriâ, c. 17, 18. Origen contra Celſum, l. v. p. 253. l. vii. p. 348. l. viii p. 423——428.

[102] Tertullian (de Corona Militis, c. 11.) ſuggeſts to them the expedient of deſerting; a counſel, which, if it had been generally known, was not very proper to conciliate the favour of the emperors towards the Chriſtian ſect.

[103] As well as we can judge from the mutilated repreſentation of Origen (l. viii. p. 423.), his adverſary, Celſus, had urged his objection with great force and candour.

[104] The Ariſtocratical party in France, as well as in England, has ſtrenuously maintained the divine origin of biſhops. But the Calviniſtical presbyters were impatient of a ſuperior; and the Roman Pontiff refuſed to acknowledge an equal. See Fra Paolo.

[105] In the hiſtory of the Chriſtian hierarchy, I have, for the moſt part, followed the learned and candid Mosheim.

[106] For the prophets of the primitive church, ſee Mosheim, Diſſertationes ad Hiſt. Eccleſ. pertinentes, tom. ii. p. 132——208.

[107] See the epiſtles of St. Paul, and of Clemens, to the Corinthians.

[108] Hooker's

[108] Hooker's Eccleſiaſtical Polity, l. vii.

[109] See Jerome ad Titum, c. 1. and Epiſtol. 85. (in the Benedictine edition, 101.) and the elaborate apology of Blondel, pro ſententia Hieronymi. The ancient ſtate, as it is deſcribed by Jerome, of the biſhop and presbyters of Alexandria, receives a remarkable confirmation from the patriarch Eutychius (Annal. tom. i. p. 330. Verſ. Pocock); whoſe teſtimony I know not how to reject, in ſpite of all the objections of the learned Pearſon in his Vindiciæ Ignatianæ, part i. c. 11.

[110] See the introduction to the Apocalypſe. Biſhops, under the name of angels, were already inſtituted in ſeven cities of Aſia. And yet the epiſtle of Clemens (which is probably of as ancient a date) does not lead us to diſcover any traces of epiſcopacy either at Corinth or Rome.

[111] Nulla Eccleſia ſine Epiſcopo, has been a fact as well as a maxim ſince the time of Tertullian and Irenæus.

[112] After we have paſſed the difficulties of the firſt century, we find the epiſcopal government univerſally eſtabliſhed, till it was interrupted by the republican genius of the Swiſs and German reformers.

[113] See Mosheim in the firſt and ſecond centuries. Ignatius (ad Smyrnæos, c. 3, etc.) is fond of exalting the epiſcopal dignity. Le Clerc (Hiſt. Eccleſ. p. 569.) very bluntly cenſures his conduct. Mosheim, with a more critical judgment (p. 161.), ſuſpects the purity even of the ſmaller epiſtles.

[114] Nonne et Laici ſacerdotes ſumus? Tertullian, Exhort. ad Caſtitat. c. 7. As the human heart is ſtill the ſame, ſeveral of the obſervations which Mr. Hume has made on Enthuſiaſm (Eſſays, vol. i. p. 76, quarto edit.), may be applied even to real inſpiration.

[115] Acta Concil. Carthag. apud Cyprian. Edit. Fell, p. 158. This council was compoſed of eighty ſeven biſhops from the provinces of Mauritania, Numidia, and Africa; ſome presbyters and deacons aſſiſted at the aſſembly; præſente plebis maximâ parte.

[116] Aguntur præterea per Græcias illas, certis in locis concilia, etc. Tertullian de Jejuniis, c. 13. The African mentions it as a recent and foreign inſtitution. The coalition of the Chriſtian churches is very ably explained by Mosheim, p. 164—170.

[117] Cyprian, in his admired treatiſe De Unitate Eccleſiæ, p. 75—86.

[118] We may appeal to the whole tenor of Cyprian's conduct of his doctrine, and of his Epiſtles. Le Clerc, in a short life of Cyprian (Bibliothéque Univerſelle, tom. xii. p. 207—378.), has laid him open with great freedom and accuracy.

[119] If Novatus, Feliciſſimus, etc. whom the biſhop of Carthage expelled from his church, and from Africa, were not the moſt deteſtable monſters of wickedneſs, the zeal of Cyprian muſt occaſionally

have prevailed over his veracity. For a very juſt account of theſe obſcure quarrels, ſee Mosheim, p. 497—512.

[120] Mosheim, p. 269. 574. Dupin, Antiquæ Eccleſ. Diſciplin. p. 19, 20.

[121] Tertullian, in a diſtinct treatiſe, has pleaded againſt the heretics, the right of preſcription, as it was held by the apoſtolic churches.

[122] The journey of St. Peter to Rome is mentioned by moſt of the ancients (ſee Euſebius, ii. 25.), maintained by all the catholics, allowed by ſome proteſtants (ſee Pearſon and Dodwell de Succeſſ. Epiſcop. Roman.), but has been vigorously attacked by Spanheim (Miſcellanea Sacra, iii. 3.). According to father Hardouin, the monks of the thirteenth century, who compoſed the Æneid, repreſented St. Peter under the allegorical character of the Trojan hero.

[123] It is in French only, that the famous alluſion to St. Peter's name is exact. Tu es *Pierre* et ſur cette *pierre*.—The ſame is imperfect in Greek, Latin, Italian, etc. and totally unintelligible in our Teutonic languages.

[124] Irenæus adv. Hæreſes, iii. 3. Tertullian de Præſcription. c. 36, and Cyprian Epiſtol. 27. 55. 71. 75. Le Clerc (Hiſt. Eccleſ. p. 764.) and Mosheim (p. 258. 578.) labour in the interpretation of theſe paſſages. But the looſe and rhetorical ſtyle of the fathers often appears favourable to the pretenſions of Rome.

[125] See the ſharp epiſtle from Firmilianus biſhop of Cæſarea, to Stephen biſhop of Rome, ap. Cyprian. Epiſtol. 75.

[126] Concerning this diſpute of the re-baptiſm of heretics, ſee the epiſtles of Cyprian, and the ſeventh book of Euſebius.

[127] For the origin of theſe words, ſee Mosheim, p. 141. Spanheim, Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. p. 883. The diſtinction of *Clerus* and *Laicus* was eſtabliſhed before the time of Tertullian.

[128] The community inſtituted by Plato, is more perfect than that which Sir Thomas More had imagined for his Utopia. The community of women, and that of temporal goods, may be conſidered as inſeparable parts of the ſame ſyſtem.

[129] Joſeph. Antiquitat. xviii. 2. Philo, de Vit. Contemplativ.

[130] See the Acts of the Apoſtles, c. 2. 4, 5. with Grotius's Commentary. Mosheim, in a particular diſſertation, attacks the common opinion with very inconcluſive arguments.

[131] Juſtin Martyr, Apolog. Major, c. 89. Tertullian, Apolog. c. 39.

[132] Irenæus ad Hæreſ. l. iv. c. 27. 34. Origen in Num. Hom. ii. Cyprian de Unitat. Eccleſ. Conſtitut. Apoſtol. l. ii. c. 34, 35. with the notes of Cotelerius. The Conſtitutions introduce this divine precept, by declaring that prieſts are as much above kings, as the ſoul is above the body. Among the tythable articles, they enumerate corn, wine, oil, and wool. On this intereſting ſubject, conſult Prideaux's Hiſtory of Tythes, and Fra-Paolo delle Materie Beneficiarie; two writers of a very different character.

[133] The ſame opinion which prevailed about the year one thouſand, was productive of the ſame effects. Moſt of the Donations expreſs their motive, "appropinquante mundi fine." See Moſheim's General Hiſtory of the Church, vol. i. p. 457.

[134] Tum ſumma cura eſt fratribus
(Ut ſermo teſtatur loquax)
Offerre, fundis venditis
Seſtertiorum millia.
Addicta avorum prædia
Fœdis ſub auctionibus,
Succeſſor exhæres gemit
Sanctis egens Parentibus.
Hæc occuluntur abditis
Eccleſiarum in Angulis:
Et ſumma pietas creditur
Nudare dulces liberos.

Prudent. περι στεφανων. Hymn. 2.

The ſubſequent conduct of the deacon Laurence, only proves how proper a uſe was made of the wealth of the Roman church; it was undoubtedly very conſiderable; but Fra-Paolo (c. 3.) appears to exaggerate, when he ſuppoſes, that the ſucceſſors of Commodus were urged to perſecute the Chriſtians by their own avarice, or that of their Prætorian præfects.

[135] Cyprian. Epiſtol. 62.

[136] Tertullian de Præſcriptione, c. 30.

[137] Diocletian gave a reſcript, which is only a declaration of the old law; "Collegium, ſi nullo ſpeciali privilegio ſubnixum ſit, hæreditatem capere non poſſe, dubium non eſt." Fra-Paolo (c. 4.) thinks that theſe regulations had been much neglected ſince the reign of Valerian.

[138] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 131. The ground had been public; and was now diſputed between the ſociety of Chriſtians, and that of butchers.

[139] Conſtitut. Apoſtol. ii. 35.

[140] Cyprian de Lapſis, p. 89. Epiſtol. 65. The charge is confirmed by the 19th and 20th canon of the council of Illiberis.

[141] See the apologies of Juſtin, Tertullian, etc.

[142] The wealth and liberality of the Romans to their moſt diſtant brethren, is gratefully celebrated by Dionyſius of Corinth, ap. Euſeb. l. iv. c. 23.

[143] See Lucian in Peregrin. Julian (Epiſt. 49.) ſeems mortified, that the Chriſtian charity maintains not only their own, but likewiſe the heathen poor.

[144] Such, at leaſt, has been the laudable conduct of more modern miſſionaries, under the ſame circumſtances. Above three thouſand new-born infants are annually expoſed in the ſtreets of Pekin. See

Le Comte Mémoires ſur la Chine, and the Recherches ſur les Chinois et les Egyptiens, tom. i. p. 61.

[145] The Montaniſts and the Novatians, who adhered to this opinion with the greateſt rigour and obſtinacy, found *themſelves* at laſt in the number of excommunicated heretics. See the learned and copious Mosheim, Sæcul. ii and iii.

[146] Dionyſius ap. Euſeb. iv. 23. Cyprian, de Lapſis.

[147] Cave's Primitive Chriſtianity, part iii. c. 5. The admirers of antiquity regret the loſs of this public penance.

[148] See in Dupin, Bibliothéque Eccléſiaſtique, tom. ii. p. 304—313. a ſhort but rational expoſition of the canons of thoſe councils, which were aſſembled in the firſt moments of tranquillity, after the perſecution of Diocletian. This perſecution had been much leſs ſeverely felt in Spain than in Galatia; a difference which may, in ſome meaſure, account for the contraſt of their regulations.

[149] Cyprian. Epiſt. 69.

[150] The arts, the manners, and the vices of the prieſts of the Syrian goddeſs, are very humourously deſcribed by Apuleius, in the eighth book of his Metamorphoſes.

[151] The office of Aſiarch was of this nature, and it is frequently mentioned in Ariſtides, the Inſcriptions, etc. It was annual and elective. None but the vaineſt citizens could deſire the honour; none but the moſt wealthy could ſupport the expence. See in the Patres Apoſtol. tom. ii. p. 200, with how much indifference Philip the Aſiarch conducted himſelf in the martyrdom of Polycarp. There were likewiſe Bithyniarchs, Lyciarchs, etc.

[152] The modern critics are not diſpoſed to believe what the fathers almoſt unanimously aſſert, that St. Matthew compoſed a Hebrew goſpel, of which only the Greek translation is extant. It ſeems, however, dangerous to reject their teſtimony.

[153] Under the reigns of Nero and Domitian, and in the cities of Alexandria, Antioch, Rome, and Epheſus. See Mill. Prolegomena ad Nov. Teſtament. and Dr. Lardner's fair and extenſive collection, vol. xv.

[154] The Alogians (Epiphanius de Hæreſ. 51.) diſputed the genuineneſs of the Apocalypſe, becauſe the church of Thyatira was not yet founded. Epiphanius, who allows the fact, extricates himſelf from the difficulty, by ingeniously ſuppoſing, that St. John wrote in the ſpirit of prophecy. See Abauzit Diſcours ſur l'Apocalypſe.

[155] The epiſtles of Ignatius and Dionyſius (ap. Euſeb. iv. 23.) point out many churches in Aſia and Greece. That of Athens ſeems to have been one of the leaſt flouriſhing.

[156] Lucian in Alexandro, c. 25. Chriſtianity however muſt have been very unequally diffuſed over Pontus; ſince in the middle of the third century there were no more than ſeventeen believers in the extenſive dioceſe of Neo-Cæſarea. See M. de Tillemont, Mémoires Eccléſiaſt. tom. iv. p. 675. from Baſil and Gregory of Nyſſa, who were themſelves natives of Cappadocia.

[157] According to the ancients, Jeſus Chriſt ſuffered under the conſulſhip of the two Gemini, in the year 29 of our preſent æra. Pliny was ſent into Bithynia (according to Pagi) in the year 110.

[158] Plin. Epiſt. x. 97.

[159] Chryſoſtom. Opera, tom. vii. p. 658. 810.

[160] John Malela, tom. ii. p. 144. He draws the ſame concluſion with regard to the populouſneſs of Antioch.

[161] Chryſoſtom. tom. i. p. 592. I am indebted for theſe paſſages, though not for my inference, to the learned Dr. Lardner. Credibility of the Goſpel Hiſtory, vol. xii. p. 370.

[162] Baſnage, Hiſtoire des Juifs, l. 2. c. 20, 21, 22, 23. has examined, with the moſt critical accuracy, the curious treatiſe of Philo, which deſcribes the Therapeutæ. By proving that it was compoſed as early as the time of Auguſtus, Baſnage has demonſtrated, in ſpite of Euſebius (l. ii. c. 17.), and a crowd of modern Catholics, that the Therapeutæ were neither Chriſtians nor monks. It ſtill remains probable that they changed their name, preſerved their manners, adopted ſome new articles of faith, and gradually became the fathers of the Egyptian Aſcetics.

[163] See a letter of Hadrian, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 245.

[164] For the ſucceſſion of Alexandrian biſhops, conſult Renaudot's Hiſtory, p. 24, etc. This curious fact is preſerved by the patriarch Eutychius (Annal. tom. i. p. 334. Verſ. Pocock), and its internal evidence would alone be a ſufficient anſwer to all the objections which Biſhop Pearſon has urged in the Vindiciæ Ignatianæ.

[165] Ammian. Marcellin. xxii. 16.

[166] Origen contra Celſum, l. i. p. 40.

[167] Ingens multitudo is the expreſſion of Tacitus, xv. 44.

[168] T. Liv. xxxix. 13. 15, 16, 17. Nothing could exceed the horror and conſternation of the ſenate on the diſcovery of the Bacchanalians, whoſe depravity is deſcribed, and perhaps exaggerated, by Livy.

[169] Euſebius, l. vi. c. 43. The Latin tranſlator (M. de Valois) has thought proper to reduce the number of preſbyters to forty-four.

[170] This proportion of the preſbyters and of the poor, to the reſt of the people, was originally fixed by Burnet (Travels into Italy, p. 168.), and is approved by Moyle (vol. ii. p. 151.). They were both unacquainted with the paſſage of Chryſoſtom, which converts their conjecture almoſt into a fact.

[171] Serius trans Alpes, religione Dei ſuſceptâ. Sulpicius Severus, l. ii. Theſe were the celebrated martyrs of Lyons. See Euſebius, v. 1. Tillemont, Mém. Eccléſiaſt. tom. ii. p. 316. According to the Donatiſts, whoſe aſſertion is confirmed by the tacit acknowledgment of Auguſtin, Africa was the laſt of the provinces which received the goſpel. Tillemont, Mém. Eccléſiaſt. tom. i. p. 754.

[172] Tum primum intra Gallias martyria viſa. Sulp. Severus, l. ii. With regard to Africa, ſee Tertullian ad Scapulam, c. 3. It is

imagined, that the Scyllitan martyrs were the firſt (Acta Sincera Ruinart. p. 34.). One of the adverſaries of Apuleius ſeems to have been a Chriſtian. Apolog p. 496, 497. Edit. Delphin.

[173] Raræ in uliquibus civitatibus eccleſiæ, paucorum Chriſtianorum devotione, reſurgerent. Acta Sincera, p. 130. Gregory of Tours, l. i. c. 28. Mosheim, p. 207. 449. There is ſome reaſon to believe, that, in the beginning of the fourth century, the extenſive dioceſes of Liege, of Treves, and of Cologne, compoſed a ſingle bishopric, which had been very recently founded. See Mémoires de Tillemont, tom. vi. part i. p 43. 411.

[174] The date of Tertullian's Apology is fixed, in a diſſertation of Mosheim, to the year 198.

[175] In the fifteenth century, there were few who had either inclination or courage to queſtion whether Joſeph of Arimathea founded the monaſtery of Glaſtenbury, and whether Dionyſius the Areopagite preferred the reſidence of Paris to that of Athens.

[176] The ſtupendous metamorphoſis was performed in the ninth century. See Mariana (Hiſt. Hiſpan. l vii. c. 13 tom. i. p. 285 edit. Hag. Com. 1733.), who, in every ſenſe, imitates Livy, and the honeſt detection of the legend of St. James by Dr. Geddes, Miſcellanies, vol. ii. p. 221.

[177] Juſtin Martyr, Dialog. cum Tryphon. p. 341. Irenæus adv. Hæreſ l. i. c. 10. Tertullian adv. Jud. c. 7. See Mosheim, p. 203.

[178] See the fourth century of Mosheim's Hiſtory of the Church. Many, though very confuſed circumſtances, that relate to the converſion of Iberia and Armenia, may be found in Moſes of Chorene, l. ii. c. 78—89.

[179] According to Tertullian, the Chriſtian faith had penetrated into parts of Britain inacceſſible to the Roman arms. About a century afterwards, Oſſian, the ſon of Fingal, is *ſaid* to have diſputed, in his extreme old age, with one of the foreign miſſionaries, and the diſpute is ſtill extant, in verſe, and in the Erſe language. See Mr. Macpherſon's Diſſertation on the Antiquity of Oſſian's Poems, p. 10.

[180] The Goths, who ravaged Aſia in the reign of Gallienus, carried away great numbers of captives; ſome of whom were Chriſtians, and became miſſionaries. See Tillemont, Mémoires Eccléſiaſt. tom. iv. p. 44.

[181] The legend of Abgarus, fabulous as it is, affords a deciſive proof, that many years before Euſebius wrote his hiſtory, the greateſt part of the inhabitants of Edeſſa had embraced Chriſtianity. Their rivals, the citizens of Carrhæ, adhered, on the contrary, to the cauſe of Paganiſm, as late as the ſixth century.

[182] According to Bardeſanes (ap. Euſeb Præpar. Evangel.) there were ſome Chriſtians in Perſia before the end of the ſecond century. In the time of Conſtantine (ſee his Epiſtle to Sapor, Vit. l iv. c. 13.) they compoſed a flouriſhing church. Conſult Beauſobre, Hiſt. Critique

du Manichéiſme, tom. i. p. 180. and the Bibliotheca Orientalis of Aſſemani.

183 Origen contra Celſum, l. viii. p. 424.

184 Minucius Fælix, c. 8. with Wowerus's notes. Celſus ap. Origen, l. iii. p. 138. 142. Julian. ap. Cyril. l. vi. p. 206. Edit. Spanheim.

185 Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. iv. 3. Hieronym. Epiſt. 83.

186 The ſtory is prettily told in Juſtin's Dialogues. Tillemont (Mém. Eccléſiaſt. tom. ii. p. 334.), who relates it after him, is ſure that the old man was a diſguiſed angel.

187 Euſebius, v. 28. It may be hoped, that none, except the heretics, gave occaſion to the complaint of Celſus (ap. Origen, l. ii. p. 77.), that the Chriſtians were perpetually correcting and altering their Goſpels.

188 Plin. Epiſt. x. 97. Fuerunt alii ſimilis amentiæ, cives Romani - - - - - Multi enim omnis ætatis, *omnis ordinis*, utriuſque ſexûs, etiam vocantur in periculum et vocabuntur.

189 Tertullian ad Scapulam. Yet even his rhetoric riſes no higher than to claim a *tenth* part of Carthage.

190 Cyprian. Epiſt. 79.

191 Dr. Lardner, in his firſt and ſecond volume of Jewiſh and Chriſtian teſtimonies, collects and illuſtrates thoſe of Pliny the younger, of Tacitus, of Galen, of Marcus Antoninus, and perhaps of Epictetus (for it is doubtful whether that philoſopher means to ſpeak of the Chriſtians). The new ſect is totally unnoticed by Seneca, the elder Pliny, and Plutarch.

192 If the famous prophecy of the Seventy Weeks had been alleged to a Roman philoſopher, would he not have replied in the words of Cicero, "Quæ tandem iſta auguratio eſt, annorum potius quam aut menſium aut dierum?" De Divinatione, ii. 30. Obſerve with what irreverence Lucian (in Alexandro, c. 13.) and his friend Celſus ap. Origen, (l. vii. p. 327.) expreſs themſelves concerning the Hebrew prophets.

193 The Philoſophers, who derided the more ancient predictions of the Sybils, would eaſily have detected the Jewiſh and Chriſtian forgeries, which have been ſo triumphantly quoted by the fathers from Juſtin Martyr to Lactantius. When the Sibylline verſes had performed their appointed taſk, they, like the ſyſtem of the millennium, were quietly laid aſide. The Chriſtian Sibyl had unluckily fixed the ruin of Rome for the year 195, A. U. C. 948.

194 The fathers, as they are drawn out in battle-array by Dom Calmet (Diſſertations ſur la Bible, tom. iii. p. 295—308.), ſeem to cover the whole earth with darkneſs, in which they are followed by moſt of the moderns.

195 Origen ad Matth. c. 27. and a few modern critics, Beza, Le Clerc, Lardner, etc. are deſirous of confining it to the land of Judea.

196 The celebrated paſſage of Phlegon is now wiſely abandoned.

When Tertullian aſſures the Pagans, that the mention of the prodigy is found in Arcanis (not Archivis) veſtris (ſee his Apology, c. 21.), he probably appeals to the Sibylline verſes, which relate it exactly in the words of the Goſpel.

[197] Seneca Quæſt. Natur. i. 1. 15. vi. 1. vii. 17. Plin. Hiſt. Natur. l. ii

[198] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. ii. 30.

[199] Virgil. Georgic. i. 466. Tibullus, l. i. Eleg. v. ver. 75 Ovid Metamorph. xv. 782. Lucan. Pharſal. i. 540. The laſt of theſe poets places this prodigy before the civil war.

[200] See a public epiſtle of M. Antony in Joſeph. Antiquit. xiv. 12. Plutarch in Cæſar. p. 471. Appian, Bell. Civil. l. iv. Dion Caſſius, l. xlv. p. 431. Julius Obſequens, c. 128. His little treatiſe is an abſtract of Livy's prodigies.

CHAP. XVI.

[1] In Cyrene they maſſacred 220,000 Greeks; in Cyprus, 240,000; in Egypt, a very great multitude. Many of theſe unhappy victims were ſaved aſunder, according to a precedent to which David had given the ſanction of his example. The victorious Jews devoured the flesh, licked up the blood, and twiſted the entrails like a girdle round their bodies. See Dion Caſſius, l. lxviii. p. 1145.

[2] Without repeating the well-known narratives of Joſephus, we may learn from Dion (l. lxix. p. 1162.), that in Hadrian's war 580,000 Jews were cut off by the ſword, beſides an infinite number which periſhed by famine, by diſeaſe, and by fire.

[3] For the ſect of the Zealots, ſee Baſnage, Hiſtoire des Juifs, l. i. c. 17. for the characters of the Meſſiah, according to the Rabbis, l. v. c. 11, 12, 13. for the actions of Barchochebas, l. vii. c. 12.

[4] It is to Modeſtinus, a Roman lawyer (l. vi. regular.), that we are indebted for a diſtinct knowledge of the Edict of Antoninus. See Caſaubon ad Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 27.

[5] See Baſnage, Hiſtoire des Juifs, l. iii. c. 2, 3. The office of Patriarch was ſuppreſſed by Theodoſius the younger.

[6] We need only mention the purim, or deliverance of the Jews from the rage of Haman, which, till the reign of Theodoſius, was celebrated with inſolent triumph and riotous intemperance. Baſnage, Hiſt. des Juifs, l. vi. c. 17. l. viii. c. 6.

[7] According to the falſe Joſephus, Tſepho, the grandſon of Eſau, conducted into Italy the army of Æneas, king of Carthage. Another colony of Idumæans, flying from the ſword of David, took refuge in the dominions of Romulus. For theſe, or for other reaſons of equal weight, the name of Edom was applied by the Jews to the Roman empire.

[8] From the arguments of Celſus, as they are repreſented and refuted by Origen (l. v. p. 247—249.), we may clearly diſcover the diſtinction that was made between the Jewiſh *people* and the Chriſtian *ſect*. See in the Dialogue of Minucius Fælix (c. 5, 6.) a fair and not inelegant deſcription of the popular ſentiments, with regard to the deſertion of the eſtabliſhed worſhip.

[9] Cur nullas aras habent? templa nulla? nulla nota ſimulacra? - - - - Unde autem, vel quis ille, aut ubi, Deus unicus, ſolitarius, deſtitutus? Minucius Fælix, c. 10 The Pagan interlocutor goes on to make a diſtinction in favour of the Jews, who had once a temple, altars, victims, etc.

[10] It is difficult (ſays Plato) to attain, and dangerous to publish, the knowledge of the true God. See the Théologie des Philoſophes, in the Abbé d'Olivet's French translation of Tully de Naturâ Deorum, tom. i. p. 275:

[11] The author of the Philopatris perpetually treats the Chriſtians as a company of dreaming enthuſiaſts, δαιμονοι, αιθεριοι, αιθεροβατωντες, αεροβατωντες, etc. and in one place, manifeſtly alludes to the viſion, in which St. Paul was tranſported to the third heaven. In another place, Triephon, who perſonates a Chriſtian, after deriding the Gods of Paganiſm, propoſes a myſterious oath,

Υψιμεδοντ᾽ θεον, μεγαν, αμβροτον, ηρανιωνα,
Υιον παλῃρ, πνευμα εκ παλῃρ εκπορευομενον
Εν εκ τριων, ϗ εξ εν τρια

Αριθμειν με διδασκεις, (is the profane anſwer of Critias), ϗ ορκ η αριθμητικη. ουκ οιδα γαρ τι λεγεις· εν τρια, τρια εν!

[12] According to Juſtin Martyr (Apolog. Major, c. 70—85.), the dæmon, who had gained ſome imperfect knowledge of the prophecies, purpoſely contrived this reſemblance, which might deter, though by different means, both the people and the philoſophers from embracing the faith of Chriſt.

[13] In the firſt and ſecond books of Origen, Celſus treats the birth and character of our Saviour with the moſt impious contempt. The orator Libanius praiſes Porphyry and Julian for confuting the folly of a ſect, which ſtyled a dead man of Paleſtine, God, and the ſon of God. Socrates, Hiſt. Eccléſiaſt. iii. 23.

[14] The emperor Trajan refuſed to incorporate a company of 150 fire-men, for the uſe of the city of Nicomedia. He diſliked all aſſociations. See Plin. Epiſt. x. 42, 43.

[15] The proconſul Pliny had published a general edict againſt unlawful meetings. The prudence of the Chriſtians ſuſpended their Agapæ; but it was impoſſible for them to omit the exerciſe of public worſhip.

[16] As the prophecies of the Antichriſt, approaching conflagration, etc. provoked thoſe Pagans whom they did not convert, they were

mentioned with caution and reſerve; and the Montaniſts were cenſured for diſcloſing too freely the dangerous ſecret. See Mosheim, p. 413.

[17] Neque enim dubitabam, quodcunque eſſet quod faterentur, ſuch are the words of Pliny), pervicaciam certe et inflexibilem obſtinationem debere puniri.

[18] See Mosheim's Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, vol. i. p. 101. and Spanheim, Remarques ſur les Cæſars de Julien, p. 468, etc.

[19] See Juſtin Martyr, Apolog. i. 35. ii. 14. Athenagoras in Legation. c. 27. Tertullian, Apolog. c. 7, 8, 9. Minucius Fælix, c. 9, 10. 30, 31. The laſt of theſe writers relates the accuſation in the moſt elegant and circumſtantial manner. The anſwer of Tertullian is the boldeſt and moſt vigorous.

[20] In the perſecution of Lyons, ſome Gentile ſlaves were compelled, by the fear of tortures, to accuſe their Chriſtian maſter. The church of Lyons, writing to their brethren of Aſia, treat the horrid charge with proper indignation and contempt. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. v. 1.

[21] See Juſtin Martyr, Apolog. i. 35. Irenæus adv. Hæreſ. i. 24. Clemens Alexandrin. Stromat. l. iii. p. 438. Euſeb. iv. 8. It would be tedious and diſguſting to relate all that the ſucceeding writers have imagined, all that Epiphanius has received, and all that Tillemont has copied. M. de Beauſobre (Hiſt. du Manichéiſme, l. ix. c. 8, 9.) has expoſed, with great ſpirit, the diſingenuous arts of Auguſtin and Pope Leo I.

[22] When Tertullian became a Montaniſt, he aſperſed the morals of the church which he had ſo reſolutely defended. "Sed majoris eſt „ Agape, quia per hanc adoleſcentes tui cum ſororibus dormiunt, appendices ſcilicet gulæ laſcivia et luxuria." De Jejuniis, c. 17. The 35th canon of the council of Illiberis provides againſt the ſcandals which too often polluted the vigils of the church, and diſgraced the Chriſtian name, in the eyes of unbelievers.

[23] Tertullian (Apolog. c. 2.) expatiates on the fair and honourable teſtimony of Pliny, with much reaſon, and ſome declamation.

[24] In the various compilation of the Auguſtan Hiſtory (a part of which was compoſed under the reign of Conſtantine), there are not ſix lines which relate to the Chriſtians; nor has the diligence of Xiphilin diſcovered their name in the large hiſtory of Dion Caſſius.

[25] An obſcure paſſage of Suetonius (in Claud. c. 25.) may ſeem to offer a proof how ſtrangely the Jews and Chriſtians of Rome were confounded with each other.

[26] See in the xviiith and xxvth chapters of the Acts of the Apoſtles, the behaviour of Callio, proconſul of Achaia, and of Feſtus, procurator of Judea.

[27] In the time of Tertullian and Clemens of Alexandria, the glory of martyrdom was confined to St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. James. It was gradually beſtowed on the reſt of the apoſtles, by the more recent Greeks, who prudently ſelected for the theatre of their preaching and

ſufferings, ſome remote country beyond the limits of the Roman empire. See Mosheim, p. 81. and Tillemont, Mémoires Eccléſiaſtiques. tom. i. part. iii.

[28] Tacit. Annal. xv. 38—44. Sueton. in Neron. c. 38. Dion Caſſius, l. lxii. p. 1014. Oroſius, vii. 7.

[29] The price of wheat (probably of the *modius*) was reduced as low as *terni Nummi*; which would be equivalent to about fifteen ſhillings the English quarter.

[30] We may obſerve, that the rumour is mentioned by Tacitus with a very becoming diſtruſt and heſitation, whilſt it is greedily tranſcribed by Suetonius, and ſolemnly confirmed by Dion.

[31] This teſtimony is alone ſufficient to expoſe the anachroniſm of the Jews, who place the birth of Chriſt near a century ſooner (Baſnage, Hiſtoire des Juifs, l. v. c. 14, 15.). We may learn from Joſephus (Antiquitat. xviii. 3.), that the procuratorſhip of Pilate correſponded with the laſt ten years of Tiberius, A. D. 27—37. As to the particular time of the death of Chriſt, a very early tradition fixed it to the 25th of March, A. D. 29, under the conſulſhip of the two Gemini (Tertullian adv. Judæos, c. 8.). This date, which is adopted by Pagi, cardinal Norris, and Le Clerc, ſeems, at leaſt, as probable as the vulgar æra, which is placed (I know not from what conjectures) four years later.

[32] *Odio humani generis convicti.* Theſe words may either ſignify the hatred of mankind towards the Chriſtians, or the hatred of the Chriſtians towards mankind. I have preferred the latter ſenſe, as the moſt agreeable to the ſtyle of Tacitus, and to the popular error, of which a precept of the Goſpel (See Luke xiv. 26.) had been, perhaps, the innocent occaſion. My interpretation is juſtified by the authority of Lipſius; of the Italian, the French, and the English tranſlators of Tacitus; of Mosheim (p. 102.), of Le Clerc (Hiſtoria Eccleſiaſt. p. 427.), of Dr. Lardner (Teſtimonies, vol. i. p. 345.), and of the biſhop of Glouceſter (Divine Legation, vol. iii p. 38.) But as the word *convicti* does not unite very happily with the reſt of the ſentence, James Gronovius has preferred the reading of *conjuncti*, which is authoriſed by the valuable MS. of Florence.

[33] Tacit. Annal. xv. 44.

[34] Nardini Roma Antica, p. 387. Donatus de Româ Antiquâ, l. iii. p. 449.

[35] Sueton. in Nerone, c. 16. The epithet of *malefica*, which ſome ſagacious commentators have tranſlated *magical*, is conſidered by the more rational Mosheim as only ſynonymous to the *exitiabilis* of Tacitus.

[36] The paſſage concerning Jeſus Chriſt, which was inſerted into the text of Joſephus, between the time of Origen and that of Euſebius, may furniſh an example of no vulgar forgery. The accompliſhment of the prophecies, the virtues, miracles, and reſurrection of Jeſus, are diſtinctly related. Joſephus acknowledges that he was the Meſſiah,

and heſitates whether he ſhould call him a man. If any doubt can ſtill remain concerning this celebrated paſſage, the reader may examine the pointed objections of Le Fevre (Havercamp. Joſeph. tom. ii. p. 267—273.), the laboured anſwers of Daubuz (p. 187—232.), and the maſterly reply (Bibliothéque Ancienne et Moderne, tom. vii. p. 237—288.) of an anonymous critic, whom I believe to have been the learned Abbé de Longuerue.

[37] See the lives of Tacitus by Lipſius and the Abbé de la Bleterie, Dictionnaire de Bayle à l'article TACITE, and Fabricius, Biblioth. Latin. tom. ii. p. 386. Edit. Erneſt.

[38] Principatum Divi Nervæ, et imperium Trajani, uberiorem ſecurioremque materiam ſenectuti ſepoſui. Tacit. Hiſt. i.

[39] See Tacit. Annal. ii. 61. iv. 4.

[40] The player's name was Aliturus. Through the ſame channel, Joſephus (de Vitâ ſuâ, c. 3.), about two years before, had obtained the pardon and releaſe of ſome Jewiſh prieſts who were priſoners at Rome.

[41] The learned Dr. Lardner (Jewiſh and Heathen Teſtimonies, vol. ii. p. 102, 103.) has proved that the name of Galilæans, was a very ancient, and perhaps the primitive, appellation of the Chriſtians.

[42] Joſeph. Antiquitat. xviii. 1, 2. Tillemont, Ruine des Juifs, p. 742. The ſons of Judas were crucified in the time of Claudius. His grandſon Eleazar, after Jeruſalem was taken, defended a ſtrong fortreſs with 960 of his moſt deſperate followers. When the battering ram had made a breach, they turned their ſwords againſt their wives, their children, and at length againſt their own breaſts. They died to the laſt man.

[43] See Dodwell. Paucitat. Mart. l. xiii. The Spaniſh Inſcription in Gruter, p. 238, No. 9, is a manifeſt and acknowledged forgery, contrived by that noted impoſtor Cyriacus of Ancona, to flatter the pride and prejudices of the Spaniards. See Ferreras, Hiſtoire d'Eſpagne, tom. i. p. 192.

[44] The capitol was burnt during the civil war between Vitellius and Veſpaſian, the 19th of December, A. D. 69. On the 10th of Auguſt, A. D. 70, the temple of Jeruſalem was deſtroyed by the hands of the Jews themſelves, rather than by thoſe of the Romans.

[45] The new Capitol was dedicated by Domitian. Sueton. in Domitian. c. 5. Plutarch in Poplicola, tom. i. p. 230. Edit. Bryan. The gilding alone coſt 12,000 talents (above two millions and a half). It was the opinion of Martial (l. ix. Epigram 3.), that if the emperor had called in his debts, Jupiter himſelf, even though he had made a general auction of Olympus, would have been unable to pay two ſhillings in the pound.

[46] With regard to the tribute, ſee Dion Caſſius, l. lxvi. p. 1082, with Reimarus's notes. Spanheim, de Uſû Numiſmatum, tom. ii. p. 571. and Baſnage, Hiſtoire des Juifs, l. vii. c. 2.

[47] Suetonius (in Domitian. c. 12.) had ſeen an old man of ninety

publicly examined before the procurator's tribunal. This is what Martial calls, Mentula tributis damnata.

[48] This appellation was at firſt underſtood in the moſt obvious ſenſe, and it was ſuppoſed, that the brothers of Jeſus were the lawful iſſue of Joſeph and of Mary. A devout reſpect for the virginity of the mother of God, ſuggeſted to the Gnoſtics, and afterwards to the orthodox Greeks, the expedient of beſtowing a ſecond wife on Joſeph. The Latins (from the time of Jerome) improved on that hint, aſſerted the perpetual celibacy of Joſeph, and juſtified by many ſimilar examples the new interpretation that Jude, as well as Simon and James, who are ſtyled the brothers of Jeſus Chriſt, were only his firſt couſins. See Tillemont, Mem. Eccleſiaſt. tom. i. part iii. and Beauſobre, Hiſt. Critique du Manicheiſme, l. ii. c. 2.

[49] Thirty-nine πλεθρα, ſquares of an hundred feet each, which, if ſtrictly computed, would ſcarcely amount to nine acres. But the probability of circumſtances, the practice of other Greek writers, and the authority of M. de Valois, incline me to believe that the πλεθρον is uſed to expreſs the Roman jugerum.

[50] Euſebius, iii. 20. The ſtory is taken from Hegeſippus.

[51] See the death and character of Sabinus in Tacitus (Hiſt. iii. 74, 75.). Sabinus was the elder brother, and, till the acceſſion of Veſpaſian, had been conſidered as the principal ſupport of the Flavian family.

[52] Flavium Clementem patruelem ſuum *contemtiſſimæ inertiæ* . . . ex tenuiſſimâ ſuſpicione interemit. Sueton. in Domitian. c. 15.

[53] The iſle of Pandataria, according to Dion. Bruttius Præſens (apud Euſeb. iii. 18.) baniſhes her to that of Pontia, which was not far diſtant from the other. That difference, and a miſtake, either of Euſebius, or of his tranſcribers, have given occaſion to ſuppoſe two Domitillas, the wife and the niece of Clemens. See Tillemont, Memoires Eccleſiaſtiques, tom. ii. p. 224.

[54] Dion, l. lxvii. p. 1112. If the Bruttius Præſens, from whom it is probable that he collected this account, was the correſpondent of Pliny (Epiſtol. vii. 3.), we may conſider him as a contemporary writer.

[55] Suet. in Domit. c. 17. Philoſtratus in Vit. Apollon. l. viii.

[56] Dion, l. lxviii. p. 1118. Plin. Epiſtol. iv. 22.

[57] Plin. Epiſtol. x. 97. The learned Moſheim expreſſes himſelf (p. 147. 232.) with the higheſt approbation of Pliny's moderate and candid temper. Notwithſtanding Dr. Lardner's ſuſpicions (ſee Jewish and Heathen Teſtimonies, vol. ii. p. 46.), I am unable to diſcover any bigotry in his language or proceedings.

[58] Plin. Epiſt. v. 8. He pleaded his firſt cauſe A. D. 81; the year after the famous eruptions of Mount Veſuvius, in which his uncle loſt his life.

[59] Plin. Epiſtol. x. 98. Tertullian (Apolog. c. 5.) conſiders this reſcript as a relaxation of the ancient penal laws, "quas Trajanus

ex parte fruſtratus eſt:" and yet Tertullian, in another part of his Apologiſts, expoſes the inconſiſtency of prohibiting inquiries, and enjoining punishments.

[60] Euſebius (Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. iv. c. 9.) has preſerved the edict of Hadrian. He has likewiſe (c. 13.) given us one ſtill more favourable under the name of Antoninus; the authenticity of which is not ſo univerſally allowed. The ſecond Apology of Juſtin contains ſome curious particulars relative to the accuſations of Chriſtians.

[61] See Tertullian (Apolog. c. 40.). The acts of the martyrdom of Polycarp exhibit a lively picture of theſe tumults, which were uſually fomented by the malice of the Jews.

[62] Theſe regulations are inſerted in the above-mentioned edicts of Hadrian and Pius. See the apology of Melito (apud Euſeb. l. iv. c. 26.)

[63] See the reſcript of Trajan, and the conduct of Pliny. The moſt authentic acts of the martyrs abound in theſe exhortations.

[64] In particular, ſee Tertullian (Apolog c. 2, 3.), and Lactantius (Inſtitut. Divin. v. 9.). Their reaſonings are almoſt the ſame; but we may diſcover, that one of theſe apologiſts had been a lawyer, and the other a rhetorician.

65. See two inſtances of this kind of torture in the Acta Sincera Martyrum, publiſhed by Ruinart, p. 160. 399. Jerome, in his Legend of Paul the Hermit, tells a ſtrange ſtory of a young man, who was chained naked on a bed of flowers, and aſſaulted by a beautiful and wanton courtezan. He quelled the riſing temptation by biting off his tongue.

[66] The converſion of his wife provoked Claudius Herminianus, governor of Cappadocia, to treat the Chriſtians with uncommon ſeverity. Tertullian ad Scapulam, c. 3.

[67] Tertullian, in his epiſtle to the governor of Africa, mentions ſeveral remarkable inſtances of lenity and forbearance, which had happened within his knowledge.

[68] Neque enim in univerſum aliquid quod quaſi certam formam habeat, conſtitui poteſt: an expreſſion of Trajan, which gave a very great latitude to the governors of provinces.

[69] In Metalla damnamur, in inſulas relegamur. Tertullian. Apolog. c. 12. The mines of Numidia contained nine biſhops, with a proportionable number of their clergy and people, to whom Cyprian addreſſed a pious epiſtle of praiſe and comfort. See Cyprian. Epiſtol. 76, 77.

[70] Though we cannot receive with entire confidence, either the epiſtles, or the acts, of Ignatius (they may be found in the 2d volume of the Apoſtolic Fathers), yet we may quote that biſhop of Antioch as one of theſe *exemplary* martyrs. He was ſent in chains to Rome as a public ſpectacle: and when he arrived at Troas, he received the pleaſing intelligence, that the perſecution of Antioch was already at an end.

[71] Among the martyrs of Lyons (Euſeb. l. v. c. 1.), the ſlave Blandina was diſtinguiſhed by more exquiſite tortures. Of the five martyrs ſo much celebrated in the acts of Felicitas and Perpetua, two were of a ſervile, and two others of a very mean, condition.

[72] Origen. adverſ. Celſum, l. iii. p. 116. His words deſerve to be tranſcribed. "Ολιγοι κατα κωμας, και σφοδρα ευαριθμητοι περι τῶν Χριστιανῶν θεσπεσιας τεθνηκασι."

[73] If we recollect that *all* the Plebeians of Rome were not Chriſtians, and that all the Chriſtians were not ſaints and martyrs, we may judge with how much ſafety religious honours can be aſcribed to bones or urns, indiſcriminately taken from the public burial-place. After ten centuries of a very free and open trade, ſome ſuſpicions have ariſen among the more learned catholics. They now require, as a proof of ſanctity and martyrdom, the letters B. M, a viol full of red liquor, ſuppoſed to be blood, or the figure of a palm-tree. But the two former ſigns are of little weight, and with regard to the laſt, it is obſerved by the critics, 1. That the figure, as it is called, of a palm, is perhaps a cypreſs, and perhaps only a ſtop, the flourish of a comma, uſed in the monumental inſcriptions. 2. That the palm was the ſymbol of victory among the Pagans. 3. That among the Chriſtians it ſerved as the emblem, not only of martyrdom, but in general of a joyful reſurrection. See the epiſtle of P. Mabillon, on the worship of unknown ſaints, and Muratori ſopra le Antichità Italiane, Diſſertat. lviii.

[74] As a ſpecimen of theſe legends, we may be ſatisfied with 10,000 Chriſtian ſoldiers crucified in one day, either by Trajan or Hadrian, on mount Ararat. See Baronius ad Martyrologium Romanum. Tillemont, Mem. Eccleſiaſt. tom. ii. part. ii. p. 438. and Geddes's Miſcellanies, vol. ii. p. 203. The abbreviation of MIL. which may ſignify either *ſoldiers* or *thouſands*, is ſaid to have occaſioned ſome extraordinary miſtakes.

[75] Dioniſius ap. Euſeb. l. vi. c. 41. One of the ſeventeen was likewiſe accuſed of robbery.

[76] The letters of Cyprian exhibit a very curious and original picture, both of the *man* and of the *times*. See likewiſe the two lives of Cyprian, compoſed with equal accuracy, though with very different views; the one by Le Clerc (Bibliothéque Univerſelle, tom. xii. p. 208—378.), the other by Tillemont, Memoires Eccleſiaſtiques, tom. iv. part. i. p. 76—459.

[77] See the polite but ſevere epiſtle of the clergy of Rome, to the biſhop of Carthage (Cyprian, Epiſt. 8, 9.) Pontius labours with the greateſt care and diligence to juſtify his maſter againſt the general cenſure.

[78] In particular thoſe of Dionyſius of Alexandria, and Gregory Thaumaturgus of Neo-Cæſarea. See Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. vi. c. 40. and Memoires de Tillemont, tom. iv. part. ii. p. 685.

[79] See Cyprian, Epiſt. 16. and his life by Pontius.

[80] We have an original life of Cyprian by the deacon Pontius, the companion of his exile, and the ſpectator of his death; and we likewiſe poſſeſs the ancient proconſular acts of his martyrdom. Theſe two relations are conſiſtent with each other, and with probability; and what is ſomewhat remarkable, they are both unſullied by any miraculous circumſtances.

[81] It ſhould ſeem that theſe were circular orders, ſent at the ſame time to all the governors. Dionyſius (ap. Euſeb. l. vii. c. 11.) relates the hiſtory of his own baniſhment from Alexandria, almoſt in the ſame manner. But as he eſcaped and ſurvived the perſecution, we muſt account him either more or leſs fortunate than Cyprian.

[82] See Plin. Hiſt Natur. v. 3. Cellarius, Geograph. Antiq. part iii. p. 96. Shaw's Travels, p. 90.; and for the adjacent country (which is terminated by Cape Bona, or the promontory of Mercury) l'Afrique de Marmol. tom. ii p. 474. There are the remains of an aqueduct, near Curubis, or Curbis, at preſent altered into Gurbes; and Dr. Shaw read an inſcription, which ſtyles that city, *Colonia Fulvia*. The deacon Pontius (in Vit. Cyprian. c. 12.) calls it "Apricum et competentem locum, hoſpitium pro voluntate ſecretum, et quicquid apponi eis ante promiſſum eſt, qui regnum et juſtitiam Dei quærunt."

[83] See Cyprian. Epiſtol. 77. Edit. Fell.

[84] Upon his converſion, he had ſold thoſe gardens for the benefit of the poor. The indulgence of God (moſt probably the liberality of ſome Chriſtian friend) reſtored them to Cyprian. See Pontius, c. 15.

[85] When Cyprian, a twelvemonth before, was ſent into exile, he dreamt that he ſhould be put to death the next day. The event made it neceſſary to explain that word, as ſignifying a year. Pontius, c. 12.

[86] Pontius (c. 15.) acknowledges that Cyprian, with whom he ſupped, paſſed the night cuſtodiâ delicatâ. The biſhop exerciſed a laſt and very proper act of juriſdiction, by directing that the younger females, who watched in the ſtreet, ſhould be removed from the dangers and temptations of a nocturnal crowd. Act. Proconſularia, c. 2.

[87] See the original ſentence in the Acts, c. 4. and in Pontius, c. 17. The latter expreſſes it in a more rhetorical manner.

[88] Pontius, c. 19. M. de Tillemont (Memoires, tom. iv. part i. p. 450. note 50.) is not pleaſed with ſo poſitive an excluſion of any former martyrs of the epiſcopal rank.

[89] Whatever opinion we may entertain of the character or principles of Thomas Becket, we muſt acknowledge that he ſuffered death with a conſtancy not unworthy of the primitive martyrs. See Lord Lyttelton's Hiſtory of Henry II. vol. ii. p. 592, etc.

[90] See in particular the treatiſe of Cyprian de Lapſis, p. 87 — 98. Edit. Fell. The learning of Dodwell (Diſſertat. Cyprianic. xii. xiii.), and

and the ingenuity of Middleton (Free Enquiry, p. 162, etc.), have left ſcarcely any thing to add concerning the merit, the honours, and the motives of the martyrs.

[91] Cyprian. Epiſtol. 5, 6, 7. 22. 24. and de Unitat. Eccleſiæ. The number of pretended martyrs has been very much multiplied, by the cuſtom which was introduced of beſtowing that honourable name on confeſſors.

[92] Certatim glorioſa in certamina ruebatur; multique avidius tum martyria glorioſis mortibus quærebantur, quam nunc Epiſcopatus pravis ambitionibus appetuntur. Sulpicius Severus, l. ii. He might have omitted the word *nunc*.

[93] See Epiſt. ad Roman. c. 4, 5. ap. Patres Apoſtol. tom. ii. p. 27. It ſuited the purpoſe of Biſhop Pearſon (ſee Vindiciæ Ignatianæ, part ii. c. 9.) to juſtify by a profuſion of examples and authorities, the ſentiments of Ignatius.

[94] The ſtory of Polyeuctes, on which Corneille has founded a very beautiful tragedy, is one of the moſt celebrated, though not perhaps the moſt authentic, inſtances of this exceſſive zeal. We ſhould obſerve, that the 60th canon of the council of Illiberis refuſes the title of martyrs to thoſe who expoſed themſelves to death, by publicly deſtroying the idols.

[95] See Epictetus, l. iv. c. 7. (though there is ſome doubt whether he alludes to the Chriſtians) Marcus Antoninus de Rebus ſuis, l. xi. c. 3. Lucian in Peregrin.

[96] Tertullian ad Scapul. c. 5. The learned are divided between three perſons of the ſame name, who were all proconſuls of Aſia. I am inclined to aſcribe this ſtory to Antoninus Pius, who was afterwards emperor; and who may have governed Aſia, under the reign of Trajan.

[97] Moſheim, de Rebus Chriſt. ante Conſtantin. p. 235.

[98] See the Epiſtle of the Church of Smyrna, ap. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. iv. c. 15.

[99] In the ſecond apology of Juſtin, there is a particular and very curious inſtance of this legal delay. The ſame indulgence was granted to accuſed Chriſtians, in the perſecution of Decius; and Cyprian (de Lapſis, expreſsly mentions the "Dies negantibus præſtitutus."

[100] Tertullian conſiders flight from perſecution, as an imperfect, but very criminal, apoſtacy, as an impious attempt to elude the will of God, etc. etc. He has written a treatiſe on this ſubject (ſee p. 536—544. Edit. Rigalt.), which is filled with the wildeſt fanaticiſm, and the moſt incoherent declamation. It is, however, ſomewhat remarkable, that Tertullian did not ſuffer martyrdom himſelf.

[101] The *Libellatici*, who are chiefly known by the writings of Cyprian, are deſcribed with the utmoſt preciſion, in the copious commentary of Moſheim, p. 483—489.

[102] Plin. Epiſtol. x. 97. Dionyſius Alexandrin. ap. Euſeb. l. vi. c. 41.

Ad prima ſtatim verba minantis inimici maximus fratrum numerus fidem ſuam prodidit: nec proſtratus eſt perſecutionis impetu, ſed voluntario lapſu ſeipſum proſtravit. Cyprian. Opera, p. 89. Among theſe deſerters were many prieſts, and even biſhops.

[103] It was on this occaſion that Cyprian wrote his treatiſe De Lapſis, and many of his epiſtles. The controverſy concerning the treatment of penitent apoſtates, does not occur among the Chriſtians of the preceding century. Shall we aſcribe this to the ſuperiority of their faith and courage, or to our leſs intimate knowledge of their hiſtory?

[104] See Mosheim, p. 97. Sulpicius Severus was the firſt author of this computation; though he ſeemed deſirous of reſerving the tenth and greateſt perſecution for the coming of the Antichriſt.

[105] The teſtimony given by Pontius Pilate is firſt mentioned by Juſtin. The ſucceſſive improvements which the ſtory has acquired (as it paſſed through the hands of Tertullian, Euſebius, Epiphanius, Chryſoſtom, Oroſius, Gregory of Tours, and the authors of the ſeveral editions of the acts of Pilate), are very fairly ſtated by Dom Calmet, Diſſertat. ſur l'Ecriture, tom. iii. p. 651, etc.

[106] On this miracle, as it is commonly called, of the thundering legion, ſee the admirable criticiſm of Mr. Moyle, in his Works, vol. ii. p. 81.—390.

[107] Dion Caſſius, or rather his abbreviator Xiphilin, l. lxxii p. 1206. Mr. Moyle (p. 266.) has explained the condition of the church under the reign of Commodus.

[108] Compare the life of Caracalla in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, with the epiſtle of Tertullian to Scapula. Dr. Jortin (Remarks on Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, vol. ii. p. 5, etc.) conſiders the cure of Severus, by the means of holy oil, with a ſtrong deſire to convert it into a miracle.

[109] Tertullian de Fugâ, c. 13. The preſent was made during the feaſt of the Saturnalia; and it is a matter of ſerious concern to Tertullian, that the faithful ſhould be confounded with the moſt infamous profeſſions which purchaſed the connivance of the government.

[110] Euſeb. l. v. c. 23, 24. Mosheim, p. 435—447.

[111] Judæos fieri ſub gravi pœna vetuit. Idem etiam de Chriſtianis ſanxit. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 70.

[112] Sulpicius Severus, l. ii. p. 384. This computation (allowing for a ſingle exception) is confirmed by the hiſtory of Euſebius, and by the writings of Cyprian.

[113] The antiquity of Chriſtian churches is diſcuſſed by Tillemont (Memoires Eccleſiaſtiques, tom. iii. part ii. p. 68—72.), and by Mr. Moyle (vol. i. p. 378—398). The former refers the firſt conſtruction of them to the peace of Alexander Severus; the latter, to the peace of Gallienus.

[114] See the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 130. The emperor Alexander adopted their method of publicly propoſing the names of thoſe perſons

who were candidates for ordination. It is true, that the honour of this practice is likewiſe attributed to the Jews.

[115] Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. vi. c. 21. Hieronym. de Script. Eccleſ. c. 54. Mammæa was ſtyled a holy and pious woman, both by the Chriſtians and the Pagans. From the former, therefore, it was impoſſible that ſhe ſhould deſerve that honourable epithet.

[116] See the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 123. Mosheim (p. 465) ſeems to refine too much on the domeſtic religion of Alexander. His deſign of building a public temple to Chriſt (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 129.), and the objection which was ſuggeſted either to him, or in ſimilar circumſtances to Hadrian, appear to have no other foundation than an improbable report, invented by the Chriſtians, and credulously adopted by an hiſtorian of the age of Conſtantine.

[117] Euſeb. l. vi. c. 28. It may be preſumed, that the ſucceſs of the Chriſtians had exaſperated the increaſing bigotry of the Pagans. Dion Caſſius, who compoſed his hiſtory under the former reign, had moſt probably intended for the uſe of his maſter thoſe counſels of perſecution, which he aſcribes to a better age, and to the favourite of Auguſtus. Concerning this oration of Mæcenas, or rather of Dion, I may refer to my own unbiaſſed opinion (vol. i. p. 55. Not. 25.), and to the Abbé de la Bleterie (Memoires de l'Academie, tom. xxiv. p. 303. tom. xxv. p. 432).

[118] Oroſius, l. vii. c. 19. mentions Origen as the object of Maximin's reſentment; and Firmilianus, a Cappadocian biſhop of that age, gives a juſt and confined idea of this perſecution (apud Cyprian. Epiſt. 75.).

[119] The mention of thoſe princes who were publicly ſuppoſed to be Chriſtians, as we find it in an epiſtle of Dionyſius of Alexandria (ap. Euſeb. l. vii. c. 10.), evidently alludes to Philip and his family; and forms a contemporary evidence, that ſuch a report had prevailed; but the Egyptian biſhop, who lived at an humble diſtance from the court of Rome, expreſſes himſelf with a becoming diffidence concerning the truth of the fact. The epiſtles of Origen (which were extant in the time of Euſebius, ſee l. vi. c. 36.) would moſt probably decide this curious, rather than important, queſtion.

[120] Euſeb. l. vi. c. 34. The ſtory, as is uſual, has been embellished by ſucceeding writers, and is confuted, with much ſuperfluous learning, by Frederick Spanheim (Opera Varia, tom. ii. p. 400, etc.).

[121] Lactantius, de Mortibus Perſecutorum, c. 3, 4. After celebrating the felicity and increaſe of the church, under a long ſucceſſion of good princes; he adds, "Extitit poſt annos plurimos, execrabile animal, Decius, qui vexaret Eccleſiam."

[122] Euſeb. l. vi. c. 39. Cyprian. Epiſtol. 55. The ſee of Rome remained vacant from the martyrdom of Fabianus, the 20th of January, A. D. 250, till the election of Cornelius, the 4th of June, A. D. 251. Decius had probably left Rome, ſince he was killed before the end of that year.

[123] Euſeb. l. vii. c. 10. Mosheim (p. 548.) has very clearly shewn, that the Præfect Macrianus, and the Egyptian *Magus*, are one and the ſame perſon.

[124] Euſebius (l. vii. c. 13. gives us a Greek verſion of this Latin edict, which ſeems to have been very conciſe. By another edict, he directed, that the *Cæmeteria* ſhould be reſtored to the Chriſtians.

[125] Euſeb. l. vii. c. 30. Lactantius de M. P. c. 6. Hieronym. in Chron. p. 177. Oroſius, l. vii. c. 23. Their language is in general ſo ambiguous and incorrect, that we are at a loſs to determine how far Aurelian had carried his intentions before he was aſſaſſinated. Moſt of the modern (except Dodwell, Diſſertat. Cyprian. xi. 64.) have ſeized the occaſion of gaining a few extraordinary martyrs.

[126] Paul was better pleaſed with the title of *Ducenarius*, than with that of biſhop. The *Ducenarius* was an Imperial procurator, ſo called from his ſalary of two hundred *Seſtertia*, or 1,600 l. a year. See Salmaſius ad Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 124.) Some critics ſuppoſe, that the biſhop of Antioch had actually obtained ſuch an office from Zenobia, while others conſider it only as a figurative expreſſion of his pomp and inſolence.

[127] Simony was not unknown in thoſe times; and the clergy ſometimes bought what they intended to ſell. It appears that the biſhopric of Carthage was purchaſed by a wealthy matron, named Lucilla, for her ſervant Majorinus. The price was 400 *Folles*. (Monument Antiq. ad calcem Optati, p. 263.) Every *Follis* contained 125 pieces of ſilver, and the whole ſum may be computed at about 2,400 l.

[128] If we are deſirous of extenuating the vices of Paul, we muſt ſuſpect the aſſembled biſhops of the Eaſt of publiſhing the moſt malicious calumnies in circular epiſtles addreſſed to all the churches of the empire (ap. Euſeb. l. vii. c. 30.)

[129] His hereſy (like thoſe of Noetus and Sabellius, in the ſame century) tended to confound the myſterious diſtinction of the divine perſons. See Mosheim, p. 702, etc.

[130] Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. vii. c. 30. We are entirely indebted to him for the curious ſtory of Paul of Samoſata.

[131] The Æra of Martyrs, which is ſtill in uſe among the Copts and the Abyſſinians, muſt be reckoned from the 29th of Auguſt, A. D. 284; as the beginning of the Egyptian year was nineteen days earlier than the real acceſſion of Diocletian. See Diſſertation préliminaire à l'Art de vérifier les Dates.

[132] The expreſſion of Lactantius (de M. P. c. 15.) „ ſacrificio pollui coegit," implies their antecedent converſion to the faith; but does not ſeem to juſtify the aſſertion of Mosheim (p. 912.), that they had been privately baptized.

[133] M. de Tillemont (Mémoires Eccléſiaſtiques, tom. v. part i. p. 11, 12.) has quoted from the Spicilegium of Dom. Luc d'Acheri,

a very curious inſtruction which biſhop Theonas compoſed for the uſe of Lucian.

[134] Lactantius de M. P. c. 10.

[135] Euſebius, Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. viii. c. 1. The reader who conſults the original, will not accuſe me of heightening the picture. Euſebius was about ſixteen years of age at the acceſſion of the emperor Diocletian.

[136] We might quote, among a great number of inſtances, the myſterious worſhip of Mythras, and the Taurobolia; the latter of which became faſhionable in the time of the Antonines (See a Diſſertation of M. de Boze, in the Memoires de l'Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. ii. p. 443.). The romance of Apuleius is as full of devotion as of ſatire.

[137] The impoſtor Alexander very ſtrongly recommended the oracle of Trophonius at Mallos, and thoſe of Apollo, at Claros and Miletus (Lucian, tom. ii. p. 236. Edit. Reitz). The laſt of theſe, whoſe ſingular hiſtory would furniſh a very curious epiſode, was conſulted by Diocletian before he published his edicts of perſecution (Lactantius, de M. P. c. 11.)

[138] Beſides the ancient ſtories of Pythagoras and Ariſteas, the cures performed at the ſhrine of Æſculapius, and the fables related of Apollonius of Tyana, were frequently oppoſed to the miracles of Chriſt; though I agree with Dr. Lardner (ſee Teſtimonies, vol. iii. p. 252. 352.), that when Philoſtratus compoſed the life of Apollonius, he had no ſuch intention.

[139] It is ſeriously to be lamented, that the Chriſtian fathers, by acknowledging the ſupernatural, or, as they deem it, the infernal, part of Paganiſm, deſtroy with their own hands the great advantage which we might otherwiſe derive from the liberal conceſſions of our adverſaries.

[140] Julian (p. 301. Edit. Spanheim) expreſſes a pious joy, that the providence of the gods had extinguiſhed the impious ſects, and for the moſt part deſtroyed the books of the Pyrrhonians and Epicureans, which had been very numerous, ſince Epicurus himſelf compoſed no leſs than 300 volumes. See Diogenes Laertius, l. x. c. 26.

[141] Cumque alios audiam muſſitare indignanter, et dicere opportere ſtatui per Senatum, aboleantur ut hæc ſcripta, quibus Chriſtiana Religio comprobetur, et vetuſtatis opprimatur auctoritas. Arnobius adverſus Gentes, l. iii. p. 103, 104. He adds very properly, Erroris convincite Ciceronem . . . nam intercipere ſcripta, et publicatam velle ſubmergere lectionem, non eſt Deum defendere ſed veritatis teſtificationem timere.

[142] Lactantius (Divin. Inſtitut. l. v. c. 2, 3.) gives a very clear and ſpirited account of two of theſe philoſophic adverſaries of the faith. The large treatiſe of Porphyry againſt the Chriſtians conſiſted of thirty books, and was compoſed in Sicily about the year 270.

[143] See Socrates, Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. i. c. 9. and Codex Juſtinian, l. i. tit. i. l. 3.

[144] Euſebius, l. viii. c. 4. c. 17. He limits the number of military martyrs, by a remarkable expreſſion (σπανιως τουτων εις πω και δευτερος), of which neither his Latin nor French translator have rendered the energy. Notwithſtanding the authority of Euſebius, and the ſilence of Lactantius, Ambroſe, Sulpicius, Oroſius, etc. it has been long believed that the Thebæan legion, conſiſting of 6000 Chriſtians, ſuffered martyrdom, by the order of Maximian, in the valley of the Penninæ Alps. The ſtory was firſt published about the middle of the vth century, by Eucherius, bishop of Lyons, who received it from certain perſons, who received it from Iſaac bishop of Geneva, who is ſaid to have received it from Theodore bishop of Octodurum. The Abbey of St. Maurice ſtill ſubſiſts, a rich monument of the credulity of Sigiſmond, king of Burgundy. See an excellent Diſſertation in the xxxvith volume of the Bibliothéque Raiſonnée, p. 427—454.

[145] See the Acta Sincera, p. 299. The accounts of his martyrdom, and of that of Marcellus, bear every mark of truth and authenticity.

[146] Acta Sincera, p. 302.

[147] De M. P. c. 11. Lactantius (or whoever was the author of this little treatiſe) was, at that time, an inhabitant of Nicomedia; but it ſeems difficult to conceive how he could acquire ſo accurate a knowledge of what paſſed in the Imperial cabinet.

[148] The only circumſtance which we can diſcover, is the devotion and jealouſy of the mother of Galerius. She is deſcribed by Lactantius, as Deorum montium cultrix; mulier admodum ſuperſtitioſa. She had a great influence over her ſon, and was offended by the diſregard of ſome of her Chriſtian ſervants.

[149] The worship and feſtival of the God Terminus are elegantly illuſtrated by M. de Boze, Mem. de l'Academie et des Inſcriptions tom. i. p. 50.

[150] In our only MS. of Lactantius, we read *profectus*; but reaſon, and the authority of all the critics, allow us, inſtead of that word, which deſtroys the ſenſe of the paſſage, to ſubſtitute *præfectus*.

[151] Lactantius de M. P. c. 12, gives a very lively picture of the deſtruction of the church.

[152] Moſheim (p. 922—926.), from many ſcattered paſſages of Lactantius and Euſebius, has collected a very juſt and accurate notion of this edict; though he ſometimes deviates into conjecture and refinement.

[153] Many ages afterwards, Edward I. practiſed, with great ſucceſs, the ſame mode of perſecution againſt the clergy of England. See Hume's Hiſtory of England, vol. ii. p. 300, laſt 4to edition.

154 Lactantius only calls him quidam, etſi non recte, magno tamen animo, etc. c. 12. Euſebius (l. viii. c. 5.) adorns him with ſecular honours. Neither have condeſcended to mention his name; but the Greeks celebrate his memory under that of John. See Tillemont, Mémoires Eccléſiaſtiques, tom. v. part. ii. p. 320.

155 Lactantius de M. P. c. 13, 14. Potentiſſimi quondam Eunuchi necati, per quos Palatium et ipſe conſtabat. Euſebius (l. viii. c. 6.) mentions the cruel executions of the eunuchs, Gorgonius and Dorotheus, and of Anthimius, biſhop of Nicomedia; and both thoſe writers deſcribe, in a vague but tragical manner, the horrid ſcenes which were acted even in the Imperial preſence.

156 See Lactantius, Euſebius, and Conſtantine, ad Cœtum Sanctorum, c. 25. Euſebius confeſſes his ignorance of the cauſe of the fire.

157 Tillemont, Mémoires Eccléſiaſt. tom. v. part. i. p. 43.

158 See the Acta Sincera of Ruinart, p. 353; thoſe of Felix of Thibara, or Tibiur, appear much leſs corrupted than in the other editions, which afford a lively ſpecimen of legendary licence.

159 See the firſt book of Optatus of Milevis againſt the Donatiſts at Paris, 1700. Edit. Dupin. He lived under the reign of Valens.

160 The ancient monuments, published at the end of Optatus, p. 261, etc. deſcribe, in a very circumſtantial manner, the proceedings of the governors in the deſtruction of churches. They made a minute inventory of the plate, etc. which they found in them. That of the church of Cirta, in Numidia, is ſtill extant. It conſiſted of two chalices of gold, and ſix of ſilver; ſix urns, one kettle, ſeven lamps, all likewiſe of ſilver; beſides a large quantity of braſs utenſils, and wearing apparel.

161 Lactantius (Inſtitut. Divin. v. 11.) confines the calamity to the *conventiculum*, with its congregation. Euſebius (viii. 11.) extends it to a whole city, and introduces ſomething very like a regular ſiege. His ancient Latin translator, Rufinus, adds the important circumſtance of the permiſſion given to the inhabitants of retiring from thence. As Phrygia reached to the confines of Iſauria, it is poſſible that the reſtleſs temper of thoſe independent Barbarians may have contributed to this misfortune.

162 Euſebius, l. viii. c. 6. M. de Valois (with ſome probability) thinks that he has diſcovered the Syrian rebellion in an oration of Libanius; and that it was a raſh attempt of the tribune Eugenius, who with only five hundred men ſeized Antioch, and might perhaps allure the Chriſtians by the promiſe of religious toleration. From Euſebius (l. ix. c. 8.) as well as from Moſes of Chorene (Hiſt. Armen. l. ii. c. 77, etc.) it may be inferred, that Chriſtianity was already introduced into Armenia.

163 See Moſheim, p. 938; the text of Euſebius very plainly ſhews, that the governors, whoſe powers were enlarged, not reſtrained, by the new laws, could punish with death the moſt obſtinate Chriſtians, as an example to their brethren.

[164] Athanaſius, p. 833. ap. Tillemont, Mém. Eccléſiaſt. tom. v. part. i. p. 90.

[165] Euſebius, l. viii. c. 13. Lactantius de M. P. c. 15. Dodwell (Diſſertat. Cyprian. xi. 75.) repreſents them as inconſiſtent with each other. But the former evidently ſpeaks of Conſtantius in the ſtation of Cæſar, and the latter of the ſame prince in the rank of Auguſtus.

[166] Datianus is mentioned in Gruter's Inſcriptions, as having determined the limits between the territories of Pax Julia, and thoſe of Ebora, both cities in the ſouthern part of Luſitania. If we recollect the neighbourhood of thoſe places to Cape St. Vincent, we may ſuſpect that the celebrated deacon and martyr of that name has been inaccurately aſſigned by Prudentius, etc. to Saragoſſa, or Valentia. See the pompous hiſtory of his ſufferings, in the Mémoires de Tillemont, tom. v part. ii. p. 58—85. Some critics are of opinion, that the department of Conſtantius, as Cæſar, did not include Spain, which ſtill continued under the immediate juriſdiction of Maximian.

[167] Euſebius, l. viii. c. 11. Gruter, Inſcript. p. 1171. N°. 18. Rufinus has miſtaken the office of Adauctus, as well as the place of his martyrdom.

[168] Euſebius, l. viii. c. 14. But as Maxentius was vanquiſhed by Conſtantine, it ſuited the purpoſe of Lactantius to place his death among thoſe of the perſecutors.

[169] The epitaph of Marcellus is to be found in Gruter, Inſcript. p. 1172. N°. 3. and it contains all that we know of his hiſtory. Marcellinus and Marcellus, whoſe names follow in the liſt of popes, are ſuppoſed by many critics to be different perſons; but the learned Abbé de Longuerue was convinced that they were one and the ſame.

Veridicus Rector lapſis quia crimina flere
Prædixit miſeris, fuit omnibus hoſtis amarus.
Hinc furor, hinc odium; ſequitur diſcordia, lites,
Seditio, cædes; ſolvuntur fœdera pacis.
Crimen ob alterius, Chriſtum qui in pace negavit
Finibus expulſus patriæ eſt feritate Tyranni.
Hæc breviter Damaſus voluit comperta referre:
Marcelli populus meritum cognoſcere poſſet.

We may obſerve that Damaſus was made biſhop of Rome, A. D. 366.

[170] Optatus contr. Donatiſt. l. i. c. 17, 18.

[171] The Acts of the Paſſion of St. Boniface, which abound in miracles and declamation, are published by Ruinart (p. 283—291.), both in Greek and Latin, from the authority of very ancient manuſcripts.

[172] During the four firſt centuries, there exiſt few traces of either biſhops or biſhoprics in the weſtern Illyricum. It has been thought probable that the primate of Milan extended his juriſdiction over Sirmium, the capital of that great province. See the Geographia Sacra of Charles de St. Paul, p. 68—76. with the obſervations of Lucas Holſterius.

[173] The

173 The viiith book of Eusebius, as well as the supplement concerning the martyrs of Palestine, principally relate to the persecution of Galerius and Maximin. The general lamentations with which Lactantius opens the vth book of his Divine Institutions, allude to their cruelty.

174 Eusebius (l. viii. c. 17.) has given us a Greek version, and Lactantius (de M. P. c. 34.), the Latin original, of this memorable edict. Neither of these writers seem to recollect how directly it contradicts whatever they have just affirmed of the remorse and repentance of Galerius.

175 Eusebius, l. ix. c. 1. He inserts the epistle of the præfect.

176 See Eusebius, l. viii. c. 14. l. ix. c. 2—8. Lactantius de M. P. c. 36. These writers agree in representing the arts of Maximin: but the former relates the execution of several martyrs, while the latter expressly affirms, occidi servos Dei vetuit.

177 A few days before his death, he published a very ample edict of toleration, in which he imputes all the severities which the Christians suffered to the judges and governors, who had misunderstood his intentions. See the Edict in Eusebius, l. ix. c. 10.

178 Such is the *fair* deduction from two remarkable passages in Eusebius, l. viii. c. 2. and de Martyr. Palestin, c. 12. The prudence of the historian has exposed his own character to censure and suspicion. It was well known that he himself had been thrown into prison; and it was suggested that he had purchased his deliverance by some dishonourable compliance. The reproach was urged in his lifetime, and even in his presence, at the council of Tyre. See Tillemont, Memoires Ecclesiastiques, tom. viii. part i. p. 67.

179 The ancient, and perhaps authentic, account of the sufferings of Tarachus, and his companions (Acta Sincera Ruinart, p. 419—448), is filled with strong expressions of resentment and contempt, which could not fail of irritating the magistrate. The behaviour of Ædesius to Hierocles, præfect of Egypt, was still more extraordinary, λογοις τε και εργοις τον δικαστην . . . περιεβαλων. Eusеb. de Martyr. Palestin. c. 5.

180 Eusеb. de Martyr. Palestin. c. 13.

181 Augustin. Collat. Carthagin. Dei, iii. c. 13. ap. Tillemont, Mémoires Ecclésiastiques, tom. v. part. i. p. 46. The controversy with the Donatists has reflected some, though perhaps a partial, light on the history of the African church.

182 Eusebius de Martyr. Palestin. c. 13. He closes his narration, by assuring us that these were the martyrdoms inflicted in Palestine, during the *whole* course of the persecution. The vth chapter of his viiith book, which relates to the province of Thebais in Egypt, may seem to contradict our moderate computation; but it will only lead us to admire the artful management of the historian. Chusing for the scene of the most exquisite cruelty, the most remote and sequestered country

of the Roman empire, he relates, that in Thebais, from ten to one hundred perſons had frequently ſuffered martyrdom in the ſame day. But when he proceeds to mention his own journey into Egypt, his language inſenſibly becomes more cautious and moderate. Inſtead of a large, but definite number, he ſpeaks of many Chriſtians (πλειους); and moſt artfully ſelects two ambiguous words (ισορησαμεν, and υπομειναντας) which may ſignify either what he had ſeen, or what he had heard; either the expectation, or the execution, of the punishment. Having thus provided a ſecure evaſion, he commits the equivocal paſſage to his readers and translators; juſtly conceiving that their piety would induce them to prefer the moſt favourable ſenſe. There was perhaps ſome malice in the remark of Theodorus Metochita, that all who, like Euſebius, had been converſant with the Egyptians, delighted in an obſcure and intricate ſtyle. (See Valeſius ad loc.)

[183] When Paleſtine was divided into three, the præfecture of the eaſt contained forty-eight provinces. As the ancient diſtinctions of nations were long ſince abolished, the Romans diſtributed the *provinces*, according to a general proportion of their extent and opulence.

[184] Ut gloriari poſſint nullum ſe innocentium peremiſſe, nam et ipſe audivi aliquos gloriantes, quia adminiſtratio ſua, in hâc parte, fuerit incruenta. Lactant. Inſtitut. Divin. v. 11.

[185] Grot. Annal. de Rebus Belgicis, l. i. p. 12. Edit. fol.

[186] Fra-Paolo (Iſtoria del Concilio Tridentino, l. iii.) reduces the number of Belgic martyrs to 50,000. In learning and moderation, Fra Paolo was not inferior to Grotius. The priority of time gives ſome advantage to the evidence of the former, which he loſes on the other hand by the diſtance of Venice from the Netherlands.

End of the Notes to the ſecond Volume.